

INSPECTION REPORT

**ST NICHOLAS CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY
SCHOOL AND NURSERY**

Stevenage, Hertfordshire

LEA area: Hertfordshire LEA

Unique reference number: 117456

Headteacher: Mrs V Edwards

Reporting inspector: Miss Savi Ramnath
21334

Dates of inspection: 4th to 7th December 2000

Inspection number: 224328

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Primary School with a Nursery

School category: Voluntary Aided

Age range of pupils: 3 to 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Six Hills Way
Stevenage
Herts

Postcode: SG2 0PZ

Telephone number: 01438 352706

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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Fr Melvyn Barnsley

Date of previous inspection: 26 February 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Miss Savi Ramnath 21334	Registered inspector	Under Fives Information Communication Technology Art	What sort of school is it? What should the school do to improve further? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? Equal Opportunities
Mrs Jo Adams 9980	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Mrs Gill Battarbee 30544	Team inspector	English Design and Technology History Music	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
Mr Martin Mangan 31177	Team inspector	Mathematics Science Geography Physical Education	How well is the school led and managed?

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The Registrar
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Nicholas CE Primary School is an average size school for children aged between three and eleven. The school serves a wide catchment area and the pupils represent a range of social backgrounds. There are currently 226 primary aged pupils in the school, organised into 7 classes, and a further 26 children who attend on a part-time basis in its Nursery. There is a slightly higher proportion of boys than girls and a small number of pupils move at times other than at transfer. All the children who attend the Nursery transfer to the main school. The local authority's baseline assessment indicates that children's basic skills when they start school are in line with or above those of children of a similar age in the county. There is one child with special educational needs in the Nursery and in the main school there are thirty-eight pupils (8.8 per cent) on the school's register of special educational needs. This proportion is well below the national average. Two pupils have statements of special educational needs. There are few pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds and all speak English as their first language. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals at five per cent is well below average. Since the last inspection, there has been a significant change of teaching staff, the development of a new information and communication technology suite and a Nursery.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school where effective teaching leads to high standards. The ethos is warm and caring and pupils make good progress and attain high standards in English, mathematics and science by the time they leave school at eleven. The headteacher and her staff, supported by governors, have high expectations of what each pupil can achieve academically and socially. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Good teaching has a positive effect on standards. As a result, pupils achieve well above average standards in English, mathematics, science and music by the end of Year 6.
- The headteacher, staff and governors work closely together to lead and manage the school effectively
- Pupils with special educational needs are identified well, are given effective support and make good progress.
- The pupils work hard; their behaviour is very good and they get on very well with one another.
- Pupils have very good social skills and a strong sense of right and wrong.
- The partnership between school and parents is very good.

What could be improved

- Children are still at risk from vehicles on the school site at the end of the day.
- Provision and teaching in the Nursery is unsatisfactory.
- There are weaknesses in the assessment of pupils' work and the monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning, in subjects other than English and mathematics.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE THE LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in February 1996. Since that time standards have improved year on year and the breadth of the school's curriculum has been sustained. All the key issues identified in the previous report have been successfully addressed. The school's good ethos has been maintained. Music is now a strength of the school and standards in physical education are in line with expectations at the end of Year 6. There are now improved arrangements for involving parents and pupils in the review of special educational needs and pupils' individual education plans have specific targets. The governing body has established appropriate systems to monitor the quality of education provided and to ensure that the budget is planned in line with the school development plan. Resources are sufficient to deliver nearly all areas of the curriculum. They are very good in music and good in information and communication technology, history and design and technology. The policy for equal opportunities and child protection procedures are well established. The staff and governors have a strong commitment to raising standards even further and the school is very well

placed to make further improvements.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	A*	B	A	A
Mathematics	A	B	A	B
Science	B	A	A	B

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
Average	C
Below average	D
Well below average	E

The results of the 2000 National Curriculum tests show that pupils' attainment in English, mathematics and science is well above the national average when compared with schools nationally. In comparison with pupils in similar schools, attainment is well above average in English and above average in mathematics and science.

The school had set itself targets for the year 2000 for the National Curriculum tests of 84 per cent of pupils gaining Level 4 or above in English and 81 per cent in mathematics. The targets were exceeded. For 2001 targets were set at the same level. This represented only a moderate degree of challenge in the light of the results for 2000. However, these have since been reviewed and are now more appropriately challenging.

Evidence from the inspection shows that children make less than satisfactory progress in the Nursery. This is largely due to unsatisfactory provision and teaching. In Year R, children make good progress so that, by the end of the Foundation Stage, most exceed the standards expected in nearly all areas of learning and enter Year 1 with a solid foundation for their work in the National Curriculum. By the time pupils leave school at the end of Year 6, standards are well above national expectations in English, mathematics, science and music. In history, art and information and communication technology standards are above national expectations. In all other subjects standards are in line with the national expectations. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well and make good progress.

Religious education was inspected as part of Section 23 of the Education Act and will be published as a separate report.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	COMMENT
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils enjoy school, are well motivated and keen to succeed. They are interested in what they do and are proud of their achievements. Their attitudes support progress in their learning.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. The quality of pupils' behaviour, including that of most of the youngest children, is very good. Pupils are courteous and respectful towards each other, their teachers and other members of staff at all times.
Attendance	Good. This is above the national average and pupils have few unauthorised absences. They arrive at school promptly and lessons start on time. This has a positive influence on their learning and

	standards of achievements.
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The pupils have very good attitudes to learning. Most are well motivated and enthusiastic in their work and develop good work habits and routines. They listen well and in a number of lessons observed, for example, in literacy and numeracy in Key Stage 2 this enabled them to make good progress. Pupils have plenty of opportunities to help others and to be responsible. Pupils get on well together and when they work in groups they do so without fuss.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Aged up to 5 years	Aged 5-7 years	Aged 7-11 years
63 lessons seen overall	Satisfactory	Good	Very good

Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.

The quality of teaching is good. It makes a significant contribution to the good progress that pupils make and has a positive impact on standards. Pupils rise to the high expectations set by teachers and have very good learning habits.

During the inspection, teaching was satisfactory or better in 90 per cent of lessons observed; in 25 per cent it was good and in 30 per cent of lessons it was very good or excellent. 10 per cent of teaching observed was unsatisfactory and in these lessons pupils did not make sufficient progress.

The quality of teaching for the foundation curriculum is sound but with some significant weaknesses in the Nursery. Teaching in Year R is good in all the recommended areas of learning. Staff in Year R understand the needs of the youngest children and the activities that they plan lead effectively towards the early learning goals for entry into compulsory education. A good range of activities is organised and managed well so that children learn to work independently. This is not the case in the Nursery.

In Key Stages 1 and 2, the teaching of English, mathematics and science is good in almost all lessons. Teachers benefit from the framework of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and, as a result, the teaching of English and mathematics is good in the infants and very good in the juniors. Teaching is better in Key Stage 2 than in Key Stage 1 and is consistently very good in Years 5 and 6. In these sessions teachers make good use of time ensuring that pupils work and learn at a brisk pace. Work is often challenging and this ensures that higher attaining pupils make the progress that they should whilst the support given to lower attaining pupils is particularly effective and enables them to make good progress. Overall pupils concentrate well which means they get the most out of lessons and take full advantage of the good quality teaching. Good relationships and interesting tasks ensure that pupils are motivated and eager to learn in many lessons.

Although much of the teaching in Key Stages 1 and 2 is at least satisfactory, some lessons need improvement. In a few lessons, the pace of the lesson is slow, subject knowledge is insecure and work is not sufficiently challenging.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The Foundation Stage curriculum is satisfactory in Year R but is unsatisfactory in the Nursery as it does not prepare children well enough for the next stage of learning. For pupils in both key stages, the curriculum provides a good quality and range of learning opportunities

	enhanced by a satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities. The clear emphasis on the delivery of literacy and numeracy is good and this contributes to the high standards attained by the end of Key Stage 2.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Pupils who need extra support are identified early and their progress is carefully tracked. Teachers provide work at different levels in the classroom and are ably assisted by learning support staff
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. Pupils are encouraged to be responsible and to have a mature, independent and reflective approach to learning. This helps their personal development. Good role models and a clear code of behaviour ensure that pupils develop a secure understanding of moral responsibilities and behave well. They have very good opportunities to develop their social skills. They reflect on their experiences, gaining insight into the values and beliefs of others. They are learning to appreciate the diverse cultures of British society.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. The headteacher and her staff know each pupil well as an individual. This does much to promote positive attitudes and is helping to raise standards. The very good monitoring of pupils academic progress in English and mathematics provides teachers with all the information they need to plan work. However, procedures for identifying and recording achievement in other subjects are inconsistent across the school.

There are very good links with parents. Parents are kept well informed about what is taught and the progress their children make. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is a significant strength. However, assessment is a weakness.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The headteacher provides effective leadership and has a firm commitment to raising standards. She is ably supported by the two key stage co-ordinators. The impact of some subject co-ordinators is limited in terms of monitoring teaching and learning.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. Governors are supportive and well informed. They provide effective support and are involved in decision-making and evaluating aspects of the school's work. They carry out their responsibilities well.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good The headteacher tracks pupils' performance throughout the school. Development targets are appropriate, with good action towards them, and there is good involvement of staff in determining them.
The strategic use of resources	Very Good. Educational priorities are supported through very good financial planning. The principles of best value are applied well in order to make optimum use of available funding. Staff, finance and accommodation are used effectively.

The school is well staffed by suitably trained and experienced teachers. Support staff make an invaluable contribution to pupils' attainment and progress. Accommodation is good in that it provides plenty of space for pupils. There is adequate resources to support learning in all subject areas with the exception of large outdoor apparatus for children in the Nursery and Year R. This is being addressed.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The good behaviour in the school. • The school expects children to work hard and achieve their best. • Their children enjoy going to school • The school encourages pupils to have positive values and attitudes. • The school is well led and managed. 	<p>A few parents expressed concerns over particular areas, especially:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The homework provision. • The quality of provision in the Nursery

The overwhelming response of parents is positive, appreciative and constructive. Inspection findings support all the positive views expressed in both the questionnaire responses and at the meeting with parents. In all instances where parents expressed a negative view, there was a contrary positive view from other parents. The inspection team agrees that the quality of provision for children in the Nursery is unsatisfactory. Although the school provides parents with sufficient information regarding homework, plans are in place to review the purpose of the homework and to ensure that it is more consistent across the school.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. When the school was last inspected in 1996, standards were identified as being unsatisfactory in music and physical education at the end of Key Stage 2. In all other subjects they were good at the end of Key Stage 2 and satisfactory at the end of Key Stage 1. However, in the years following the inspection initiatives have been put into place to address these weaknesses and to improve overall standards. Specialist teaching in music, development of an information and communication technology suite (ICT), additional resources, staff training, the adoption of a schemes of work in all subjects and the implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, have all had particularly beneficial effects on overall standards.
2. Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 are well above expectations in English, mathematics, science and music, and above expectations in ICT, history and art. In all other subjects standards are average. At the end of Key Stage 1, although standards have improved in English and mathematics, they have not been maintained in a number of the foundation subjects. Inspection evidence shows that standards in English, mathematics, music, history and ICT are above expectations by the end of Year 2. In all other subjects, standards are average except physical education which is below national expectations.
3. Analysis of the 2000 National Curriculum test results for Key Stage 2 shows that, compared with all schools, standards are well above average in English, mathematics and science. When compared with similar schools standards are well above average in English and above average in mathematics and science. The percentage of pupils attaining the expected Level 4 was well above the national average in English and mathematics and above in science. The percentage of pupils attaining the higher Level 5 was well above in all three subjects. Results for 2000 have improved significantly at the higher Level 5 in English, 21 per cent to 55 per cent, and in mathematics from 25 per cent to 42 per cent. In science at both levels and in English and mathematics at the expected Level 4, there was slight improvement. When the end of Key Stage 2 test results for the three years to 2000 are analysed they show that the overall trend, although erratic, has risen in line with improvements nationally. One reason for the variations each year has been the differing proportions of pupils with special educational needs in each year group.
4. When compared with all schools, the Key Stage 1 test results in 2000 show that pupils attained well above average standards in writing, above in reading and average standards in mathematics. When compared with similar schools, standards are well above average in writing, average in reading and below average in mathematics. The teachers' assessments of pupils' attainment in science showed above average standards when compared with all schools and average when compared with similar schools. Results for 2000 are less good in reading, writing, mathematics and science at both the average Level 2 and the higher Level 3. However, in reading and mathematics at the higher Level 3, there has been a slight improvement. Between 1998 and 2000 pupils' performance exceeded the national average in mathematics, reading and writing. There were no significant differences in the performance of boys and girls in these tests.
5. Senior managers complete a very rigorous analysis of standards as part of their ongoing monitoring of the school's work. Weaknesses identified are addressed promptly and the information is used to set targets at the end of Key Stage 2. The school exceeded its stated target in 2000 for 84 per cent of its pupils to reach, or exceed, the expected level in English and 81 per cent in mathematics. For 2001 the targets were set at the same level. However, these have been reviewed and are now realistic and challenging.
6. The literacy and numeracy sessions are having a particularly beneficial effect and literacy skills are practised well across many areas of the curriculum. Examples include the use of reports and

instructions, which are featured well in subjects such as science. Pupils are introduced to appropriate vocabulary for the study of subjects such as ICT, science and history. Pupils' numeracy skills are applied and developed well in some subjects, particularly in science and design and technology. Overall, the implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies is good and this is showing positive results in terms of improved quality of learning and better standards.

7. The youngest children are admitted to the Nursery with levels of attainment which are generally in line with the local authority average. Provision is unsatisfactory and children make unsatisfactory progress. The results of the baseline assessments show that children start Year R with above average skills in language, mathematics and in their personal and social development. Provision is good in Year R and children of all abilities make good progress so that by the end of the Foundation Stage, most exceed expectations in all areas of learning except physical and creative development which are average.
8. Standards in almost all aspects of English are well above expectations at the end of Year 6 and above expectations at the end of Year 2. Pupils' progress is good in Key Stage 1 and very good in Key Stage 2. Good progress is due, in part to the positive ethos for learning, good quality teaching in many of the lessons and the implementation of the literacy hour. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils speak with clarity, using a wide vocabulary. They listen attentively to teachers' explanations and instructions, respond appropriately to questions and many express opinions confidently and articulately. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have a wide and expressive vocabulary, share ideas and give well-considered reasons for their views. They listen well to one another and willingly contribute to class discussions. By Year 2, pupils read with fluency and expression and enjoy a wide range of books. They have a sound knowledge of initial letter sounds and use their phonic knowledge to help with the reading of unfamiliar words. By the age of eleven, pupils tackle a wide range of texts confidently, make informed choices of books and show a good understanding of elements such as inference and deduction. By the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils write independently with phonetic spelling and simple punctuation, while the oldest pupils in Key Stage 2 produce varied and interesting writing which conveys meaning clearly. Pupils of all ages develop good handwriting and present their work well.
9. In mathematics, standards at the end of Key Stage 2, are well above national expectations and above expectations at the end of Key Stage 1. Progress is good in Key Stage 1 and very good in Key Stage 2. The impact of the numeracy hour has been positive. By the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils have a solid grasp of numbers. They add and subtract numbers to twenty and beyond, count forward and backwards in twos and tens and order numbers to one hundred. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils show very good levels of numeracy skills. They are developing good ways for working things out and explain their methods. Pupils read and interpret six figure numbers and are secure in working with the four operations of number. They understand the relationships between fractions and decimals and use their understanding of place value to multiply and divide whole numbers and decimals.
10. When pupils leave school at the end of Key Stage 2, attainment in science is well above national expectations and progress is very good. At the end of Key Stage 1, attainment is in line with national expectations and progress is satisfactory. By the end of Year 2, pupils know some materials change when heated and that some materials are better suited for specific purposes. By the end of Key Stage 2, most pupils have a good understanding of how to plan and conduct an experiment. They carry out investigations, make predictions about outcomes and use scientific vocabulary appropriately and with increasing confidence.
11. Standards in ICT are above national expectations at the end of Year 6 and in line with expectations at the end of Year 2. The school's recent investment in equipment, the ICT suite, good support by the technician and staff enthusiasm have helped to raise standards. By the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils are familiar with the computer keyboard and are quick and skilful in

their control of the mouse for selecting an icon and moving items around the screen. They word process sentences onto the computer, delete and insert letters, and some use upper and lower case type with accuracy. In Key Stage 2, pupils skilfully merge text and graphics and create spreadsheets to present their information. Older pupils, by the end of the key stage, are skilful when handling computers and have developed confidence in a wide range of applications. Examination of pupils' past work shows that they make little use of ICT in other subjects.

12. In all other subjects of the curriculum, pupils' attainment meets the levels set by the National Curriculum except in art, history and music which are above the nationally expected standards and in physical education at the end of Key Stage1, which is below expectations.
13. Pupils with special educational needs reach good standards of attainment against the learning targets set for them in their individual educational plans and their progress is good as seen in their reviews and in their class work against the targets set. The good progress made by these pupils results from positive attitudes to learning which are encouraged by the school's supportive ethos. There was no evidence of significant variations in the attainment of boys or girls or pupils from differing backgrounds during the inspection.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

14. The last inspection found that the attitudes, behaviour and personal development of the children were good and had a significant effect on standards achieved. The positive attitudes have continued and are now very good. Pupils obviously enjoy school life, both in lessons and around the school, at lunchtime and playing in the playground. In discussion with pupils at lunch, one commented that she "just loved school" and her enthusiasm was evident. This enthusiasm is reflected in the high attendance rate and low levels of unauthorised absence.
15. Children in Year R make a positive start and quickly settle into school. Their personal and social skills are promoted well. They relate well to each other and play co-operatively. They listen carefully to adults, have good levels of concentration and follow instructions. In the classroom and play areas they behave well and are developing a sense of right and wrong. They show initiative in helping to tidy away resources in a sensible way and are becoming more independent. They have a happy start to school life. This is not the case in the Nursery.
16. Pupils in both key stages are keen to be involved in the school, and those with responsibilities as prefects or school council representatives spoke very positively about their role in the school. In lessons, pupils are enthusiastic to contribute and to develop their learning, for example in a Year 4 lesson, two girls had produced personal talks which they gave to the rest of the class. They were confident, had prepared well and showed a high level of desire to learn and communicate their knowledge to the rest of the class. This contributed significantly to their own and the rest of the class's learning.
17. Pupils settle quickly to work and concentrate well. In most classes, particularly where teaching is good, they listen attentively and are keen to get on with the task. In a Year 5 science lesson for example, pupils worked hard and enthusiastically whilst carrying out an investigation into graphite as a conductor. They maintained a good pace of activity which was fostered by the teacher and as a result were able to carry out and record their experiment well. Whilst most pupils listen well, in the Nursery the children do not listen well. They have not been taught to be quiet whilst the teacher is talking. This has a negative effect on their learning.
18. Parents reported that they felt behaviour was good and in most lessons and around the school. Behaviour was seen to be very good, particularly where teachers are skilled at managing behaviour and work hard to maintain discipline. Pupils move around the school in an orderly manner, they are open, polite and courteous when talking to visitors. They have a good understanding of the expectations regarding behaviour. During class worship, pupils were observed to have exemplary behaviour which reflected their respect for the occasion. In the

playground, pupils play well together but occasionally are over boisterous. This may be due to the lack of playground activities.

19. Pupils with special educational needs also respond well and work hard. They are effectively helped by support staff and the special needs co-ordinator and even those pupils who struggle to concentrate often make good progress. There were no exclusions in the last year. There was no evidence of bullying during the week of the inspection although there have been a few recorded instances in the past. These were quickly and effectively dealt with by the headteacher.
20. The strong moral code in the school is respected and pupils have a good understanding of how their behaviour impacts on others. They have a well-developed sense of responsibility and show initiative in helping others, for example, in shutting a door when the noise outside was disturbing the teacher. In lessons there are too few opportunities for pupils to take great independence for their work and this limits their development. Where they are given opportunities for example in Year 3 art, whilst printing, pupils respond well and demonstrate a good level of independence.
21. Relationships throughout the school are very good: pupils relate well to all staff, feel comfortable talking to them and respect their views. Pupils are frequently observed supporting each other well, both in lessons as they work together and around the school. The pupils become confident and assured. This was particularly well demonstrated by the maturity of the representatives on the school council.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

22. The overall good quality of teaching has an important effect on standards. Teaching is good in Key Stage 1 and very good in Key Stage 2. During the inspection, 63 lessons or part lessons were observed. Of these, 90 per cent were satisfactory or better. 25 per cent of lessons were good, 24 per cent were very good and a further six per cent were excellent. Ten per cent of teaching were unsatisfactory. This is a satisfactory improvement since the last inspection when 15 per cent of lessons were unsatisfactory and only 20 per cent were very good or better. Weaknesses identified in the teaching have been addressed and this, in part, is responsible for the improvement in the standards of pupils' work. During the inspection, two unsatisfactory lessons were seen in Key Stage 1. These lessons did not challenge the pupils and opportunities were missed to extend pupils' learning. Teaching is predominantly very good or better in Years 5 and 6, and this has a positive impact on standards of achievement. In Key Stage 1, there is a greater proportion of satisfactory teaching. Good teaching was observed in every year group in Key Stage 2. The strengths in the quality of teaching which were identified in the last report have been maintained or improved.
23. Good and very good teaching was seen in nearly all subjects. This has a positive effect on pupils' learning in all stages of their education, particularly in Key Stage 2 where good, very good and excellent teaching was observed. High expectations of work and behaviour, shared objectives and the purposeful atmosphere that teachers create in their classrooms encourage pupils to do their best and learn effectively. Music teaching is a great strength with teaching often of the highest quality.
24. The quality of teaching for the Foundation Stage is sound overall. It is unsatisfactory in the Nursery. Planning is unsatisfactory and there is a lack of clearly identified intentions of what children will learn from each activity. As a result, interactions with children are not sufficiently focused and much of the teacher's time is spent in overseeing activities rather than in direct teaching. Children are not well managed. The support provided by the nursery nurse and classroom assistant is good. They play an important part in creating a secure environment and help to provide the individual support and encouragement which typifies the teaching in the early

years. In Year R, teaching is good in nearly all areas of learning. It is sound in creative development. The teacher has a good knowledge of how young children learn and plan activities which lead effectively towards attaining the goals identified in the Foundation Curriculum. Both teacher and classroom assistant work well together as a team, giving sufficient support and guidance, whilst at the same time encouraging independence. Questioning skills are very effectively used to encourage children to focus their thinking and extend their learning. The pace of lessons is good and expectations are appropriate. Children are very well managed which ensures that they quickly settle to school routines and make the most of their learning opportunities.

25. The teaching of English and mathematics is good and has benefited from the introduction of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. In the whole-class sessions, most teachers lead discussions well and manage pupils effectively by using a range of strategies to promote learning. Discussions at the end of lessons are used well to review the main points of the lesson and to ensure that pupils have a secure understanding of the work before moving them on to the next stage in their learning. The skills of literacy, particularly in reading, are successfully built on as pupils move through the school and they make good progress. In numeracy, the oral and mental sessions are taught effectively. Teachers pay special attention to explain concepts clearly and, as a result, learning is good. There is an effective focus on the development of mental arithmetic with regular, challenging, quick-fire questioning at the start of lessons. This helps to maintain pupils' interest and enables them to consolidate previous learning. Most teachers encourage pupils to find different ways for solving problems and to explain their methods. This is successful in helping pupils look for alternative ways of problem solving. The use of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills in other curriculum areas is good. Pupils explain their findings to each other succinctly and in a manner that encourages discussion and the formulation of further questions.
26. Teachers demonstrate a sound subject knowledge in all areas of the curriculum. This enables them to make effective and pertinent teaching points and to provide pupils with accurate and relevant information. Pupils can, therefore, make good progress in their own understanding of the subject. This was well demonstrated in a Year 6 science lesson where the teacher effectively used a range of practical tasks to introduce the formation of shadows. Appropriate scientific vocabulary, that was easily understood, was introduced, and new words were clearly explained. Information was imparted in a lively and stimulating way which engaged pupils' interest and motivated them well. This led to pupils making good progress during the lesson.
27. In most lessons, across the school, teachers have high expectations of pupils in their work and behaviour and plan work which is challenging. Pupils respond well to this and are keen to do their best in nearly all lessons. A Year 5 literacy lesson was a good example of this. In this lesson the teacher had graded the work extremely carefully to ensure that pupils had tasks that closely matched their prior attainment and designed to move them swiftly on to greater understanding. All the pupils worked diligently and behaved in an exemplary manner throughout. Expectations of good behaviour are mostly high and this leads to a productive working environment where pupils feel valued and secure, and this has a positive impact on learning. Most teachers have effective class management skills and create a calm atmosphere, which is conducive to learning. Good examples of this were seen throughout Key Stage 2.
28. Teachers use a suitable range of teaching methods to deliver the National Curriculum to pupils of all abilities. These methods are carefully thought out to match both the subject content and the needs of the pupils. When appropriate, for example in a Year 6 ICT lesson on creating a website, pupils are encouraged to work together in groups. They support one other in their learning due to the good organisational skills of the teacher. In other lessons, pupils work independently and take some responsibility for their own learning. They are eager to succeed and make good progress. This was clearly seen in a Year 2 history lesson in which pupils were sequencing historical artefacts. All pupils were very keen to complete the task they were set in the time allocated. Pupils in Years 2 and 5 have benefited from booster classes and additional

support through the 'Zippy Club'.

29. Most teachers manage pupils well so that behaviour in lessons is nearly always good. Of particular note is the very good management of pupils and the good relationships which teachers in Key Stage 2 have with their pupils. Teachers are firm but fair in keeping order and most handle easily distracted pupils sensibly. They make good use of their voices and use praise, for example, in a Year 3 literacy lesson by praising those who put their hands up before answering. In a few lessons in Key Stage 1, teachers lack the strategies to manage well the challenging behaviour of a minority of pupils. As a result, some pupils make little progress in their learning.
30. Teachers are well organised for lessons and have suitable resources available for pupils. During the literacy hour, teachers group pupils around them well, so that everyone can see the board or the book being read. Most teachers make good use of the time available and the pace of teaching is often brisk. This keeps pupils on their toes and challenges them to work hard at their tasks. However, in a few lessons, the pace of the lesson slows. As a result, pupils lose interest, become restless and cover less of the curriculum than they should. In both key stages teachers make good use of support assistants in classrooms, involving them fully in the main part of the lesson, so that pupils have constant help from adults. This enables pupils to seek advice and develop confidence in their own abilities. However, support assistants are not always used effectively during the first part of the literacy and numeracy lesson. The use of ICT to support learning in other subjects is limited and rarely forms a part of teaching in any subject.
31. Planning of lessons is satisfactory overall, and has improved since the previous inspection. The best and most detailed planning is prepared for the literacy and numeracy sessions where clear objectives are often shared with pupils at the start of each lesson. This ensures that pupils understand what is expected of them and allows them to work at a suitable pace. However, in other subjects, objectives are more descriptive of the activities to be undertaken than what is to be learned. This weakness in planning means that it is difficult for teachers to assess pupils' attainment and judge learning if it is not always clear what pupils are expected to learn. Further, plans do not identify the provision for pupils of different abilities. Consequently, identical work, for example in ICT, is often set for all pupils and high attainers are not always sufficiently challenged.
32. Teachers' ongoing assessment of pupils' work is good. Most teachers are skilled in using well-focused questions to check and challenge pupils' thinking and understanding. They make good use of the plenary session to revisit the learning objectives and discuss with pupils the extent to which they have been achieved. This practice helps pupils to know how well they are acquiring new knowledge, understanding and skills. It also gives teachers an opportunity to evaluate their own teaching, pupils' learning and know what to plan for the next lesson. Most pupils have a good idea of how they are learning. For instance, teachers in Key Stage 2, listen and respond well to their pupils and help them to improve the quality of their work by giving helpful feedback and praise which motivates and encourages them. In Key Stage 2, marking is completed regularly with supportive comments and advice for improvement. As a result, most pupils understand what they are doing, how well they have done and how they can improve. A few parents are critical of the inconsistent way homework is provided throughout the school. Inspection evidence shows that homework is not used consistently to support pupils' learning.
33. Pupils with special educational needs are taught well. Teachers ensure that work is at an appropriate level. They make good use of the learning support staff to support the work of pupils identified with special educational needs. The close attention which support staff give individuals and groups of pupils allows pupils with special educational needs to gain increased understanding of the work and leads to good progress. In Key Stage 2, pupils with special needs benefit from booster classes provided through government funding.
34. In the two unsatisfactory lessons seen in Key Stage 1, the pace of teaching was very slow and planning did not clearly identify the learning objectives. As a result, pupils were left unsure of

what they were expected to achieve in the lesson and were unable to focus on improving their skills and knowledge. Pupils were not targeted and high attaining pupils were not always challenged intellectually. In a few instances, behaviour expectations slipped and talking was tolerated amongst small groups of pupils when they should have been listening. When this happens learning is adversely affected and the teacher struggles to keep the pupils' interest.

HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?

35. Since the last inspection the school has maintained a good quality range of learning opportunities for its pupils. The statutory curriculum is in place and is enhanced by good use of the local area; day visits further afield, residential visits and a range of extra-curricular activities.
36. The curriculum for the Foundation Stage in the Nursery has some significant shortcomings and children are not well prepared for the next stage of learning. The school has recognised the need to implement a Foundation Stage curriculum which will ensure that children are working towards the Early Learning Goals as they move through the Foundation Stage. In Year R, the curriculum is broad and relevant and good in many respects. It prepares children well for starting more formal education in Year 1.
37. Although the Key Stage 1 daily teaching time has been reduced slightly since the last inspection the teaching time for both key stages matches the minimum DfEE recommendations. The curriculum content also meets statutory requirements and the school has worked hard to ensure full curriculum coverage. The school is working to maintain a balance between the core and foundation subjects and there are some good examples of cross-curricular work, such as the extended writing using an historical theme in Year 2.
38. Literacy and numeracy are taught well in both key stages. The allocation for English is slightly above the recommended allocation. The school has adapted the literacy strategy to meet the needs of the pupils, whilst not compromising on the content. The organisation and the additional English lessons are successful in achieving good standards. Whilst the literacy and numeracy strategies are having a positive impact on standards in English and mathematics, there is also evidence that they are beginning to impact across the curriculum, for example, through the use of pamphlets as an information source in a geography lesson, or measuring in design and technology.
39. Curriculum planning is in place but lacks overview and consistency. There is no established long-term overview for the whole school indicating time allocations and termly subject allocations. The subject long-term plans are developed from the schemes of work, and the majority show good half-termly coverage but have no indication of the time allocation. Physical Education is less comprehensive with the omission of dance and this needs to be addressed. The majority of the medium term plans show more detailed subject planning termly or half-termly, but there are inconsistencies between classes. The short-term or weekly plans are in place for literacy, numeracy and the foundation curriculum, but here there are inconsistencies in the content of the planning between classes, and some aspects of the planning such as assessment are unsatisfactory.
40. The school provides a range of clubs, including a French club and sporting activities for pupils, mainly at Key Stage 2. Musical activities are high on the agenda for many of the pupils and all take part in a wide variety of performances during the year. In addition to the basic curriculum, the school offers a wide range of instrumental tuition. This includes wind, string and keyboard instruments with lessons carefully organised to avoid pupils missing other areas of the curriculum. The curriculum is also enhanced by visitors, book weeks, concerts, fund raising and links with the local community, such as the visits to the elderly and attendance at the local churches.
41. Key Stage 2 pupils are offered residential trips that are linked to the curriculum, although there is some lack of clarity in the subject time allocations for the trips which needs to be addressed.

However, these visits are recalled enthusiastically by the pupils; they provide opportunities for first hand experiences and very good social opportunities, which greatly enhance their learning.

42. Equality of access to the curriculum is good. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported across the curriculum and there is a policy for gifted and talented pupils. Careful timetabling ensures that pupils who attend additional sessions, such as special needs support or instrumental tuition, do not consistently miss other areas of the curriculum. All pupils are included in the visits and trips.
43. Provision for pupils with special educational needs was good at the time of the last inspection and has been further improved. It is now very good and is a strength of the school. The number of pupils on the school register for special educational needs is well below average, but the school has an effective policy of early identification and intervention and the pupils make good progress. This policy results in a high number of pupils at Stage 2 of the Code of Practice in Key Stage 1. These pupils are provided with focused support enabling many to achieve average levels of attainment at the end of the key stage.
44. The individual education plans written for the pupils have improved since the last inspection. With the support of the co-ordinator the teachers write good quality short-term targets that are now specific and precise, and the individual education plans are monitored closely by the co-ordinator. The teaching assistants, class teachers and special educational needs co-ordinator meet regularly to review pupil progress and revise programmes of work.
45. The pupils are very ably supported in class by teaching assistants. From lesson observations and the scrutiny of planning there is evidence that much of the work for pupils is differentiated although there is little evidence in the teachers' planning to show how the IEP targets are supported for these pupils during lessons when there is no teaching assistant present.
46. A weekly support group for Key Stage 2 pupils is a notable feature of the special needs support. This is delivered through the music curriculum and focuses on the development of communication skills, social skills and self-esteem. Pupils respond very positively in these sessions.
47. The school has a detailed long-term plan for the teaching of personal, social and health education. The school has a sex education policy and is in the process of developing a drugs education policy. The personal, social and health education curriculum is delivered through lessons and the teaching is well supported by assemblies and informal opportunities such as registration times and school council. Insufficient teaching was observed to make overall judgements, however the small amount of teaching observed in Key Stage 2 was excellent. The pupils displayed a mature sensitivity towards the difficulties experienced by others. This standard of teaching and learning makes a significant contribution to the well-developed personal, social and moral awareness of the pupils.
48. In daily lessons and activities the spiritual development of the pupils is satisfactory. Good opportunities are capitalised upon in some aspects of the curriculum such as music, when the sound of the new instruments caused amazement among the pupils. Equally there are missed opportunities across the curriculum when pupils were not actively encouraged to wonder at the nature of their learning. However the main focus for the pupils' spiritual development is through the Christian ethos of the school and this will be reported separately.
49. The moral and social development of pupils across the school is very good. The work of the school in promoting charitable fund raising and the way in which pupil achievements are celebrated informally and formally all add to the high level of development, further improved since the last inspection. Pupils have a clear knowledge of right and wrong, and are able to discuss difficult issues such as the difference between what they might like to do as opposed to what might be the best thing to do. They are also encouraged to consider the impact of their actions on other people, and to make and accept difficult or unpopular decisions. The ethos

displayed in the School Council meeting underpins the very good work in this area. All year groups from Reception to Year 6 are involved and demonstrate an impressive understanding of their role and responsibilities in contributing to the development of their school on behalf of their peers.

50. The provision for pupils' cultural development is sound. History, music, geography and art in particular provide opportunities for pupils to explore their own culture and those of others, historical and contemporary, the Romans and Greeks, the North American Indians, or Victorians. Some visits from artists such as African musicians support the development of cultural awareness but there are also missed opportunities. The awareness of cultural diversity does not have a high profile around the school and the library book stock, noted in the last inspection for development, remains unsatisfactory in promoting cultural awareness.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

51. In many respects the welfare of the pupils has a high priority in the school. Procedures for child protection are in place although new staff have yet to receive training and the systems for dealing with accidents and medication are comprehensive. Governors have a clear health and safety policy and are closely involved in monitoring safety within the school. However, there is a health and safety issue for the school. The parking situation at the end of the day, whereby parents park on the school playground and drive out whilst children are running around and playing on the playground, poses a threat to the pupils' safety. The school is aware of the problem and has taken some action to ameliorate the situation through having the caretaker supervising traffic and by having a small fence to separate the children from traffic but this is not sufficient.
52. The headteacher has worked particularly hard to involve the midday assistants in the school routines by drawing up clear responsibilities and providing training and good opportunities to discuss concerns. This is important in ensuring that teachers are aware of what has happened at lunch time and to enable the staff to monitor any individuals causing concern.
53. The school works hard to monitor and promote good attendance and behaviour. There are good systems for following up absences and the headteacher regularly reviews registers to check attendance patterns. Any concerns are discussed with the educational welfare officer who visits the school regularly. Attendance is accurately recorded and reported to parents. The school has worked particularly hard recently to draw up a new behaviour policy which focuses on rewarding good behaviour but also gives clear structures to sanctions used. The use of rewards and merits is appreciated by the pupils and promotes good behaviour effectively. Many teachers are particularly skilled at managing behaviour in lessons and this has a significant impact on the standards achieved as all pupils are able to work hard and concentrate well without being distracted.
54. Teachers and support staff have a very good awareness of pupils' individual needs and this is important in providing support and guidance as appropriate. Whilst there has been monitoring of pupils' personal development in the past, this is not taking place at present. Behaviour and attendance are, however, closely monitored by class teachers and the headteacher.
55. The school is beginning to introduce effective assessment procedures. Regular and on-going assessments in English, mathematics and science are used carefully to set targets for each pupil and an aggregated school target. These are challenging and support the school's aims of having high standards. The headteacher is aware of the need to review and improve systems for assessment. Assessment of pupil progress in the core subjects of English, Mathematics and Science are satisfactory but current assessment and recording of pupil progress in the foundation subjects is not well established. As a consequence, information from assessment is not always specific enough to help with the planning.

56. Use of assessment information to guide curricular planning is satisfactory in the core subjects of English, Mathematics and Science, although there are inconsistencies in teacher assessment which is in need of improvement. Procedures for assessment in foundation subjects is currently unsatisfactory. However, baseline assessment for pupils under five and new procedures in place for assessing the attainment and progress of pupils in every year group for English, mathematics and science are positive initiatives.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

57. Parents are very supportive of the school and this is a significant factor in the success of the school. The importance of the need for a partnership is recognised by both the parents and the school: the school seeks and listens to parents' views and parents support the school.
58. At the meeting for parents and from the response to the questionnaire, parents are generally satisfied with the standards the pupils achieve and with what the school provides. Nearly all parents said that their child likes school and that the school is successful in helping their child become mature and responsible. These aspects were found to be great strengths in the school. There was some concern expressed at the meeting about the provision for children in the Nursery and about the breadth of the curriculum. Some parents felt that some subjects were being squeezed.
59. The school provides a range of good information for parents about the life and work of the school: the prospectus and annual report to parents from governors are full and detailed, newsletters provide useful detail about day to day activities at the school and curriculum evenings are held for parents to keep them informed about new developments such as the introduction of the literacy and numeracy strategies. Each class teacher sends out a termly letter informing parents about the topics to be covered in the forthcoming term. Many are very useful but there is some inconsistency in their content. Whilst there are regular consultation evenings for parents, the annual reports could be more informative in the foundation subjects. They provide good information for parents about how their child is doing in mathematics, English and science but the detail on other subjects is limited and gives insufficient guidance for parents on progress made or standards achieved.
60. The school places a very strong emphasis on involving parents in the school and in their child's education and the resulting strong partnership is evident throughout the school and is very important in raising standards and achievement. The homework diaries and reading records are well used and many parents have written comments in their child's record. Many parents help in school with a range of activities, but what is of significant importance is the good use the school makes of the expertise of individual parent. For example, one parent helps in several classes with art and her support has a very good impact on the standards of art achieved by the pupils. In a Year 3 art lesson, pupils were using different techniques to print patterned wallpaper. The class teacher was able to use the parent's skills well in combination with her own teaching to allow the pupils to choose their own patterns and use a range of resources to produce high quality work.
61. Parents also support their child's work at home, regularly listening to them read and helping with particular projects, for example the pupils in Year 4 who were presenting their own talks had been able to bring a range of resources from home. There is an active parent/school association, which has raised valuable funds to support the school.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

62. The head teacher provides effective, resourceful and supportive leadership. She receives good support from all staff and from the governing body. Staff work cohesively as a caring team, committed to the welfare of the pupils and the whole community. This gives the school a clear sense of purpose and, as a result, relationships are very good throughout the school. The

school's aims are reflected in its daily work; the school community is lively and caring, and pupils are constantly encouraged to be thoughtful and responsible. Under the leadership of the headteacher the school has made satisfactory to good progress in most areas since the last inspection. She has maintained the strengths highlighted in the previous report and developed the school further. Regular meetings with the senior management team have kept a constant focus upon raising standards of pupil attainment, especially in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, where good standards are generally achieved.

63. The governing body meets regularly to oversee the work of the school. The committee structure is well established and working effectively. Key governors are active, well informed, and keen to use and extend their expertise. The governors are committed to the school and several make regular focus visits, such as 'Governor of the Month'. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Governors have established effective links with the parents. They are gradually developing their understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses although not all currently have a clear, shared understanding of the main priorities of the school. However, the governors are fully committed to the future success of the school and the capacity for improvement remains high. The school meets all statutory requirements.
64. There is a comprehensive development plan in place, which identifies priorities for each committee of the governing body and for each subject co-ordinator over a three-year period. This is regularly monitored by the governing body. The development plan has been significantly improved since the last inspection but the overall priorities of the school are still not sufficiently clear to staff and governors. The headteacher is beginning to delegate responsibility to the staff, who value the levels of responsibilities given to them. Members of the senior management team and subject co-ordinators have clear roles and responsibilities. They are given some time away from teaching to monitor teachers' planning, and to support colleagues. However, the subject co-ordinators have not yet begun to make classroom observations or systematically collect sufficient evidence to gain a secure understanding of standards through the school.
65. The headteacher monitors the quality of teaching and learning in all classes. Formal observations are followed up with written and verbal feedback indicating areas for improvement. This is working relatively well and beginning to have an impact upon teaching and learning in some classes. However, the evidence from these monitoring activities needs to be evaluated more effectively and reported to the governing body to help them determine the most important priorities for the school. Overall, the school's monitoring systems are not sufficiently rigorous to impact upon the quality of teaching and learning in all classes and all subjects. This is an area in need of further improvement. Subject co-ordinators are responsible for their own resources, and they help in shaping the direction of the school through their own action plans. Most have a clear understanding of their role and are beginning to provide colleagues with helpful support and advice. The targets set by the school for English and mathematics are achievable and reflect the school's commitment to high standards. Several subjects, including English, mathematics, ICT and music, are particularly well managed.
66. There is good professional support for all staff and evidence that appraisal systems have been relatively well established in the past. These have ceased of late but the school has recently developed a new policy for the performance management of all staff and established secure arrangements to ensure its implementation in the near future.
67. The school also makes very good provision for pupils with special educational needs and this is a strength of the school. The work of the special educational needs co-ordinator is good. She works closely with colleagues, the special educational needs governor and, with parents and in the limited time she has available, she monitors the provision for pupils and their progress. The special educational needs governor is well informed, visits the school regularly and ensures that the governing body is also kept up to date. The school has well-developed links with secondary schools which are particularly significant in ensuring a smooth transfer for Year 6 pupils.
68. Financial planning is good. Following the last inspection, the headteacher and governors have revised the structure of the school development plan to allow a closer link between planning and budgeting, which ensures that the priorities set are clearly budgeted for. Funds have been

earmarked to provide additional support in classes and resources for building developments. Whilst some committees have long-term plans, the school is just starting to draw up a three year financial plan for the whole school. Each committee of the governing body has a clear action plan which is costed and evaluated regularly and the head teacher ensures very good financial control. The school's administration is very efficient and members of staff ensure that procedures are accurately followed, enabling the financial and other administrative work to be carried out unobtrusively. Additional funds, available for the school's work in supporting pupils with special educational needs, are used effectively. The school uses new technology appropriately to support the administration. The school is aware of and effectively applies the principles of best value. Parents and pupils' views are regularly sought. There is a regular review of comparison of costs and results with other schools and the governing body invites formal tenders for major expenditure.

69. The school places a high priority on the additional support given to pupils and the number of support staff employed is good. They are usually well deployed in classrooms. All support staff promote pupils' learning well. They regularly work with groups and are skilled in encouraging pupils to complete set tasks. Training for support assistants is well established and as a consequence they make a significant contribution to standards achieved.
70. The staff, accommodation and learning resources are used appropriately for the benefit of the pupils. The match of teachers and support staff to the needs of the curriculum is good overall. The school has made steady improvements to the range and quality of resources since the previous inspection so that they are adequate overall, with several subjects having good quality. The new information technology suite, for example, is of high quality, and enables pupils to make good progress. The ICT technician provides excellent support for pupils. School playgrounds provide good facilities for outdoor play for pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2. There is a satisfactory outside play area for the pupils in the Nursery but provision for other under-fives in the reception class is unsatisfactory.
71. There are sufficient learning resources to meet the needs of the pupils, and for many subjects provision is good. They are good in ICT, history and design and technology and very good in music. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection. However, provision for physical education, geography and large apparatus for children who complete the Foundation Stage in Year R is more limited. The accommodation in the school is good overall. Classrooms are well organised and provide attractive learning environments for pupils. The school receives very good support from its active, busy caretaker. The school is attractive and well cared for. Pupils' work is very effectively displayed and the school is bright and welcoming.
72. The school takes appropriate action to obtain best value well when making purchases and in managing the overall resources. The school takes care to ensure that all staff are given access to regular in-service training within the school. In addition, staff are given the opportunity to attend additional off-site courses to improve their technical expertise. Arrangements for the induction of new staff are satisfactory. The school meets the statutory requirements for the curriculum.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

In order to build upon the many strengths of the school and further improve the standard of work and quality of the education provided, the governors, headteacher and staff in co-operation with the local education authority should:

Continue to seek ways to improve the safety of pupils who are at risk from vehicles crossing the car park at the end of the day. (para 51)

***Improve the quality of provision for all children in the Foundation Stage by improving:**

- the quality of teaching in the Nursery; (para 24, 82)
- the organisation and the management of provision in the Nursery;(para 7, 36)
- levels of resources, especially large construction materials and equipment for good quality outside play to develop children's physical skills in the Nursery and Year R. (para 71, 80)
- provision for role play in Year R; (para 81)
- the current assessment procedures to ensure that all children experience fully the activities planned for them in both the Nursery and Year R. (para 84)

Further develop the leadership and management roles of all subject co-ordinators by:

- providing clear guidance, time and training to enable subject co-ordinators to monitor and evaluate teaching, learning and pupils' attainment; (para 66, 84, 105, 114, 128, 145, 167, 176)

Extend the good systems that currently exist for recording pupils' progress in English and mathematics by:

- introducing assessment in other areas of the curriculum and making greater use of the assessment information to guide planning; (para 128, 143, 167))
- ensuring that assessment records and procedures are consistent throughout the school; (para 128)

In addition to the key issues above, the following issues should be considered for inclusion in the action plan. Measures should be considered to ensure that:

- the quality and range of opportunities for pupils to use ICT across the curriculum are increased; (para 8, 157)
- consistency is achieved in the quality of teachers' marking of pupils' work so that comments encourage pupils and inform them about ways to improve their work; (para 153)

*The school has already begun to address this issue

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	62
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	25

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
6	23	26	35	2	0	0

The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR– Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	14	213
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals		10

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	1	37

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	13
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	14

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.2
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	0.5

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	21	12	33

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	19	19	19
	Girls	12	12	12
	Total	31	31	31
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	94 (97)	94 (97)	94 (97)
	National	84 (82)	85 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	19	19	20
	Girls	12	12	11
	Total	31	31	32
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	94 (97)	94 (97)	97 (100)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	17	14	31

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	16	13	15
	Girls	14	14	14
	Total	30	27	29
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	97 (82)	87 (79)	94 (89)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	11	13	13
	Girls	12	12	12
	Total	23	25	25
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	74	81	80
	National	70	72	79

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	3
Black – African heritage	5
Black – other	5
Indian	1
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	1
White	179
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23.4
Average class size	30.4

Education support staff: YR– Y6

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	27

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	

Number of pupils per FTE adult	9
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999-2000
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	£
Total income	447,154
Total expenditure	442,338
Expenditure per pupil	1805
Balance brought forward from previous year	31,339
Balance carried forward to next year	36,155

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out

226

Number of questionnaires returned

74

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	65	34	0	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	55	42	3	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	47	49	3	0	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	38	49	11	0	3
The teaching is good.	56	41	1	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	36	49	11	3	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	65	24	7	4	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	69	28	1	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	47	47	3	3	0
The school is well led and managed.	64	34	1	1	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	57	36	1	1	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	27	58	11	1	3

PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

74. Since the last inspection the school has extended its provision for the youngest children by adding a Nursery class. Children enter the Nursery with a broad range of attainment in the term before their fourth birthday. They attend for three and sometimes four terms on a part-time basis before transferring to the full-time reception class in the term in which they are five. There are two intakes into Year R – at the start of the autumn and spring terms. Some children have three terms of full-time provision in Year R to complete the Foundation Stage whilst the youngest children have only two terms. Most of the children who enter Year R transfer directly from the Nursery. During the inspection, 26 children attended the Nursery on a part-time basis. The assessments on entry to Year R are carried out during the first term and results indicate that children's basic skills on entry to school are in line and above those of children of a similar age in the county.
75. The previous full inspection reported that under-fives were given a good start to school in all the areas of learning. Inspection evidence show that the overall quality of provision in the Nursery is unsatisfactory and does not ensure that children benefit from an early years curriculum, despite the satisfactory range of activities on offer. However, provision in Year R has been largely maintained in nearly all areas of learning. As a result, the majority of children make good progress, and exceed the expected standards by the end of the Foundation Stage in all areas of learning, except in physical and creative development, which are average. Children are well prepared for the National Curriculum and within Year R, they are able to follow appropriate programmes linked to it, if they are capable.

Personal, social and emotional development

76. The provision for this area is good in Year R but barely satisfactory in the Nursery. Most children happily come into the Nursery at the beginning of a session. They are learning to share, to take turns and to work both independently and collaboratively. Some younger children remember that they must not shout when in the hall and most know that it is polite to hold the door open for others. Despite this good start, children in the Nursery do not have many experiences which encourage them to take responsibilities in the classroom or which promote wider social skills. They do not consistently play a very active part at clearing up time or in looking after class equipment. Some show good levels of independence in choosing from a variety of activities and a few sustain interest for some time. However, a significant number of children find difficulty concentrating for an extended time. In Year R children make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development and by the end of the foundation stage attain standards above those expected in this area of learning. Children respond positively to the experiences offered to them and show an eagerness to explore new learning situations. Very positive relationships have developed between children and adults that effectively promote a happy and secure environment. Children come into the classroom happy and confident and part easily from their parents and carers at the beginning of each session. They have learned the importance of classroom routines such as lining up, listening quietly to the teacher or putting their hands up when they want to contribute to a discussion. The children settle down quickly to tasks and become involved in what they are doing. For example, they showed particularly good concentration and persistence when making their cardboard cut-out 'glasses' Children behave well around the classrooms and during group occasions: they listen carefully to staff and respond readily to questions and requests. They work and play well together particularly in the sand-pit, for example, and co-operate suitably when taking turns to use the bean-bags and quoits in the hall. They deal with their personal hygiene well and when taking part in physical development sessions, the vast majority of pupils change their clothes independently. They treat school property carefully and help to clear away.

Communication, language and literacy

77. By the end of Year R, most children exceed the recommended goals in this area of learning. Children's development in this area is well supported in Year R but is less good in the Nursery.

Through structured play some younger children develop their speaking and listening skills and are beginning to use language appropriately to express their ideas, for example, in the role-play area set up as a 'Fishing Boat'. Although support staff purposefully intervene in the activities and engage children in conversation their oral skills are not well extended as they do not have sufficient planned opportunities to develop and extend their speaking and listening skills. Children enjoy looking at books but few have knowledge of initial sounds or the alphabet. Some opportunities exist for children to practise emergent writing in the Nursery during play. In Year R staff are aware of the importance of speaking and purposefully intervene to engage the children in conversation and increase their vocabulary in every area of the classroom. By the end of the foundation stage most children are fluent, articulate speakers who are keen to talk about what they have done. They respond quickly to instructions and often reply to questions by answering in sentences and using the appropriate vocabulary to convey meaning. All children listen well. They develop good listening skills through listening to adults reading books, for example, 'Looking at bears', or giving instructions about activities. Children handle books carefully, turning pages correctly and know that print is read from left to right. Some can 'retell' a story using the pictures in the storybook to illustrate the meaning and most answer questions about the events in a story. Many recognise a few words and name and say the sounds of letters. More able children know how to put sounds together to form words. A format of the literacy hour is tailored to meet the needs of the youngest children. Handwriting is developing as a result of regular practice and letters are consistently formed when copying the teachers' model or writing 'letters' for Postman Pat to post. With help from the teacher, lower attaining children complete simple sentences whilst higher attaining children write about their teddy bears unaided. All children in the nursery and reception classes take books home regularly to share with adults.

Mathematical development

78. The mathematical development of children by the end of the foundation stage is above that expected for their age. Provision is limited in the Nursery but good in Year R. In the Nursery, children begin to use mathematical language such as 'heavier' and 'lighter' when weighing parcels. They practise incidental counting in a variety of situations and make sequential patterns by threading cotton reels on a string. Again, however the class teacher has too little direct involvement with the children and opportunities are missed to extend children's mathematical development through practical work and games. In Year R most confidently name squares, triangles and circles and identify identical shapes in a picture whilst more able children know their properties. Number games are thoughtfully planned, help children to use their initiative and develop social skills and reinforce their mathematical development. Children explore concepts of capacity and measures when they use sand and water and fill containers with various items. Most develop an appropriate understanding of number and count from one to ten accurately, and are familiar with larger numbers from their everyday life. Mathematical vocabulary is further extended when children use and apply their knowledge of 'more than' 'when adding beads to each section of the container and they develop their mathematical understanding of addition and subtraction when showing different ways of making five. Most children know the month of their birthday and can name the days of the week. They use information technology to support their mathematical development and are well prepared for the National Curriculum in Key Stage 1.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

79. Attainment in this area of learning exceeds the standards expected by the end of the Foundation Stage, and children make good progress in Year R, as a result of a wide range of well planned activities and good teaching. In the Nursery although children are given opportunities for learning through exploration, observation and examination of features of living things, learning intentions are not clear and children do not sustain concentration long enough to benefit from the activities. Structured play activities in sand and water are not used enough to develop children's early geographical and scientific understanding. The focus theme of fishing in the Nursery provided opportunities for children to learn about the different parts of the fish. With enthusiasm, a few use the magnifying glasses provided to look closely at the scales, gills, mouth and tail of a fish. In the outside play area, some start to develop their geographical vocabulary in the course of following directions and making routes. By the end of the Foundation Stage most children ask relevant questions about how things work and why things happen. Their observational skills are developing

well when they sort and classify materials. This helps them to begin to explain the differences between glass, wood, metal and plastic. Children learn about the past and present in the context of talking about new and old teddy bears and their early geographical skills are encouraged when they draw a route plan of the journey 'The Jolly Postman' made when delivering his mail. All children have good opportunities to practise skills in cutting and joining materials. Most use construction equipment with confidence to make recognisable models which they use in 'free play' to enhance their understanding about directions. In Year R children use the computer well to support their learning and good use is made of the specialist ICT room. Most know the function of the buttons on the keyboard and accurately use the space bar when word processing simple sentences. Many develop good control of the computer mouse to move items around the screen.

Physical development

80. By the end of the Foundation Stage, children reach the national expectations of the Early Learning Goals. Their physical skills are developing satisfactorily in the Nursery but less so in Year R because provision is lacking. Outdoor apparatus is available in the Nursery and provides adequate learning opportunities and suitably challenging physical activities. Children run, jump and climb with appropriate dexterity and manoeuvre wheeled toys skilfully. In Year R, opportunities are limited for pupils to engage in daily physical activity on purpose-built, large safe play equipment because there is a lack of access to suitable large apparatus and wheeled toys. Consequently progress in balancing, climbing and controlling wheeled toys is less well developed. However, they move confidently and imaginatively with increasing control and co-ordination during hall time. In the Nursery, children develop their fine motor skills through making fish paste sandwiches and when using rolling pins to roll their playdough to make fish. In Year R, children demonstrate sound manipulative skills when using construction toys, and when painting, writing, drawing, cutting or collage making. In both classes children are presented with a range of activities, and staff intervene appropriately to help them develop their skills, for example, when making fish collage or using scissors to cut out 'glasses'. Overall most children make good progress in developing the skills of cutting, sticking, joining, threading and modelling so that by the time they are ready to start Year 1 they are able to manipulate tools such as pencils, crayons, glue spreaders and brushes appropriately and with increasing precision.

Creative development

81. By the end of the Foundation Stage, children's creative development is in line with the expected standards in this area of learning. Satisfactory opportunities are provided for them to experiment with a range of media. All children mix colours and learn to use paint and brushes with increasing accuracy and, when printing with different objects, they show developing control by producing carefully considered patterns. They use a variety of techniques including painting, printing, collage and drawing, and improve their cutting and sticking skills. Good examples of this were the large attractive frieze of an island scene in the Nursery and of the Jolly Postman in Year R. In both classes children receive good adult support which enables them to work carefully, imaginatively and thoughtfully and to develop their skills. Their work shows an increasing attention to detail as seen in their paintings of animals. Children enjoy music and participate enthusiastically in singing a wide range of songs, including 'Little Donkey' and 'Christmas pudding'. They enjoy actions and explore the beat in a song such as 'Johnny was a soldier' and have a good knowledge of rhymes, many of which provide additional practice for their number work. Role-play activities in the Nursery allow children to undertake different roles in the 'Pirate Ship' and to extend their speaking and listening skills. However, opportunities are limited in Year R as this area is not very stimulating and lacks any clear learning focus.

82. The quality of teaching for the Foundation Stage is satisfactory overall and good in Year R. It is, however, unsatisfactory in the Nursery, despite the invaluable contribution made by the nursery nurse and support staff. Daily plans in the Nursery often lack clarity and detail, and the activities that are planned often have little bearing on the learning intentions indicated on the planning. In addition, too many activities are on offer and the children do not always persevere but move constantly from task to task. The organisation of activities does not always promote learning, and opportunities to challenge children to take their thinking further are often missed. The management of children is insecure, and children are not always clear about what is acceptable

or not. Unsatisfactory response often occurs when the pace of the lesson is too slow to hold children's attention, the focus of the lesson is missed and children are not clear about what they have to do, resulting in a chaotic atmosphere. Overall, teaching is too dependent on support staff and there is too little direct interaction and teaching except with small groups of children. A high proportion of 'teaching time' is merely supervision.

83. The quality of teaching for children who continue the Foundation Stage in Year R is good in all the recommended areas of learning. There are instances of some very good teaching and no unsatisfactory teaching was observed. Planning in Year R follows the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies for Key Stage 1 in English and mathematics, and takes account of the Early Learning Goals for the other areas. Pupils are managed well and good discipline is achieved through a caring yet firm approach. Where teaching is most effective, lessons begin with concise, clear explanations and introductions are followed by well focused support. Planning makes good cross-curricular links and time and resources are used effectively. Support staff are fully briefed and well deployed. All adults encourage children to talk about their experiences and ideas, and they use praise and ask questions effectively to encourage those who are less confident. Good examples of this were seen in the literacy session on initial sounds and in the science focus session. In Year R, very good relationships exist between the class teacher and parents who come in to help. This has a positive impact on children's achievements and learning.
84. The provision for children aged under five is not well managed. Currently, there is no monitoring of the teaching and learning for children in Year R by the early years co-ordinator who is based in the Nursery. Although good use is made of the information gained from the baseline assessments in both the Nursery and Year R, assessment procedures are not well established. The school has adopted the local authority's record of assessment. However, there is no ongoing record of children's attainment and progress linked to the early learning goals. Overall, there is a lack of quantifiable assessment to help teachers focus work, not only to support what the children know, but to specifically teach what they do not.
85. Arrangements for both starting school and for children moving on to Year R are good. Parents are kept satisfactorily informed about their children's progress. They have opportunities to visit the school formally but are welcome to discuss problems and concerns on a day-to-day basis. Resources in the Nursery are adequate, used well and stored appropriately and the outdoor area is used well for a range of imaginative activities. In Year R, resources are also adequate but children have no regular access to a secure play area or large equipment and wheeled toys for the necessary outdoor play. The provision for role-play in Year R is underdeveloped. It does not sufficiently stimulate or encourage children to develop their own stories.

ENGLISH

86. Standards in English at the end of both key stages are above average in almost all aspects of the subject.
87. In Key Stage 1, standards in reading have remained above and well above average since 1997. In 2000 the standards were above average in comparison with all schools and average in comparison to similar schools. In writing, standards have maintained a very high level since 1997, being in the top five per cent of schools. In 2000 the standards dipped slightly but remained well above average in comparison to all schools and to similar schools. Although overall Key Stage 1 is above average in English, there are some discrepancies. In writing, both boys and girls achieve higher percentages at Level 2 and above than the national average. However, the boys' percentage is significantly lower than that of the girls. Speaking and listening is graded as average for pupils achieving Level 2 or above. Pupils achieving level 3 for speaking and listening are graded as below the national average. The evidence from the inspection suggests that the majority of pupils attain above average levels in Key Stage 1.
88. In Key Stage 2, standards have remained above average since 1997, showing a slight decline in 1999, with a return to well above average in 2000. In comparison to schools with similar percentages of free school meals, the school is well above average. However, in comparison to

the pupils' prior attainment at the end of Key Stage 1, the level of achievement is average.

89. The standards seen during lessons, and from the work scrutiny, support the view that attainment at the end of both key stages remains well above average in English. The school has set moderately challenging targets for the percentage of pupils to achieve Level 4 at the end of Key Stage 2, however the target percentage of pupils predicted to achieve Level 5 is low.
90. By the age of eleven the great majority of pupils are confident and competent in their speaking and listening skills. Pupils are willing and able to converse using a mature range of vocabulary and are able to both lead and respond to conversation. Progress through Key Stage 2 is good as exemplified in Year 4 where pupils prepare individual talks for the class. These are of a high quality. Pupils prepare carefully with the listener in mind, they organise their presentations well, using visual aids with confidence and enter into an interesting question and answer session with the audience. One such presentation was about crystals. Not only were the speaking and listening skills good but the pupils were fascinated by the content and learnt an interesting range of facts. The listeners are attentive and understand the skills of listening.
91. The Key Stage 1 National Curriculum assessment results show inconsistency in attainment in speaking and listening and the percentages attaining the higher Level 3 are below average. Observations during the inspection indicate higher percentages of pupils on track to achieve Level 3.
92. By the end of Key Stage 1 the majority of pupils are confident to speak, using appropriate language. They are able to continue a theme and maintain a logical conversation about a range of issues. They express their views and opinions, are able to talk about abstract issues and continue conversations through the use of questions, illustrated by a pupil discussion in a Year 1 geography lesson when pupils were discussing the maps they were drawing. Pupils listen well and remember what has been said but a minority are still learning the conventions of the body language of the listener, for example maintaining eye contact with the speaker in School Council. The majority of pupils use correct sentence structure and spoken grammar and enjoy using the correct terminology, such as in a Reception/Year 1 music lesson when most pupils understood and used pitch, rhythm and beat correctly.
93. In Key Stage 2 progress in reading is good, pupils use a range of texts, and make inferences and deductions. They are able to discuss characters, settings and themes and many are able to use a range of source materials, illustrated well in Year 6 work on the theme of spiders. Some pupils show evidence of working at Level 6 through their own responses to and interpretations of favourite texts, authors and styles. The great majority of pupils are able to discuss aspects of reading they enjoy and the overall attitude towards reading is very positive.
94. At Key Stage 1 progress in reading is also good. Pupils describe very clearly how the reading system works, and express real enjoyment of the books they read. A range of styles is available for the pupils to choose from and several were able to discuss their preferences for poetry, stories or non-fiction.
95. By the age of eleven, the majority of pupils write legibly in sentences demarcated by paragraphs and make good use of punctuation. The spelling is generally good and the content is imaginative and thoughtful, carefully prepared with the reader in mind. Pupils take care with the presentation of their work and are confident to talk about the assessments made in the marking by the teacher. The majority of pupils are working securely within Level 4 and many also demonstrate more advanced elements of writing. For a minority of pupils, spelling is less accurate, the use of basic punctuation and grammar is inconsistent and handwriting still shows a mixture of cursive and print.
96. By the end of Key Stage 1, the majority of pupils write in a well organised style, using good imagination. The use of basic grammar is good and spelling is satisfactory. Many pupils are beginning to use cursive script and there is good evidence of the pupils showing clear understanding of the use of narrative and non-narrative writing. From the evidence in lessons and

work scrutiny there is still a discrepancy between the achievement of girls and boys. However, the school has recently introduced a particular focus on raising the attainment level of boys' writing. The majority of pupils are working well within level 2 or above and from the work scrutiny there is clear evidence that the majority of pupils are making good progress.

97. Generally, the manner in which pupils respond to lessons is a strength in both key stages. They are well behaved, contribute to lessons and are confident with each other and with the adults. In the very small minority of cases when pupils were less enthusiastic, the pace of the lesson and style of questioning was inappropriate to maintain their interest. Pupils speak enthusiastically about their work and are keen to discuss their ideas. Opportunities for pupils to develop their independent skills in lessons are inconsistent. In some instances pupils are not encouraged to use basic resources, such as pencil sharpeners, without teacher intervention, in other examples, pupils are encouraged to take part in much higher order independence skills such as sharing in the assessment of both their own and their peers' work.
98. The weekly timetable includes daily literacy lessons, additional reading sessions to ensure the pupils read every day, a weekly library session to change books, opportunities for extended writing and the use of English in other subject areas. Although the teaching of English is well organised, the time allocation for English is slightly above the recommended time. Some additional reading sessions lack specific learning objectives and there is little evidence of the inclusion of library skills in the curriculum.
99. Pupils, who have special educational needs, are sensitively supported by the teaching assistants. The teachers and assistants plan the work with the Special Needs Co-ordinator and the time is well used. For example in the Literacy hour, teaching assistants work closely with their group of pupils in the whole class session to prompt and encourage them. In the group work, the assistants have a clear lesson plan to work to and have high expectations of the pupils. The pupils with special educational needs make good progress.
100. Although the more able pupils attain higher than average levels of attainment, expectations for these pupils are not consistently high. Opportunities are missed for extending the learning of the most able. For example, questioning rarely challenges the most able, there are few learning objectives specifically differentiated for the most able and there are few opportunities for pupils to extend their independent learning skills.
101. The quality of teaching in English in both key stages is at least satisfactory, and most of it is good, with some very good teaching in Key Stage 2. Teachers ensure pupils understand the context of the lesson and the learning objectives. They plan well-structured lessons in which the timing and pace ensure that pupils remain on task and successfully complete their tasks. Plenary sessions are used to reinforce the learning, pupils understand the routines and structures of lessons and make a positive contribution. Teachers have high expectations of pupil behaviour and pupils are very well managed. In the great majority of lessons, relationships between teachers and pupils are an important factor in creating a positive and enjoyable learning environment. Teachers use good strategies for ensuring pupils understand concepts, such as modelling how to do something, or indeed, how not to do something.
102. Where teaching is very good, lessons are full of ideas that interest and motivate the pupils, and teachers expect the highest possible level of achievement for each pupil. In these lessons questioning is well structured to challenge each ability group and a range of questioning strategies is employed, keeping all the pupils involved and enabled to contribute. Where teaching is less good, questioning strategies are limited, the more able pupils are not challenged and on occasions too much teacher talk slows the pace and limits the opportunities for pupil involvement, sometimes resulting in pupils becoming less interested.
103. Planning for literacy is generally good, although in some examples the learning objectives could be more explicit. There are some good examples of informal and formal assessment in lessons, some of which involve the pupils, such as in a Year 4 speaking and listening lesson. However, assessment notes referred to on the planning documents are inconsistent and there is

limited evidence as to how these informal assessments in lessons inform future planning. In the great majority of examples seen, pupils' work is marked and there are some good examples of formative assessments for the pupils, although this is somewhat inconsistent. In some classes pupils have individual targets in their books. However, the use of this strategy is inconsistent and not yet embedded as part of the pupils' routines in focusing them on their own improvement, as some pupils had clearly forgotten about them, the majority could find them and a few said they sometimes remembered to look at them. Although the school has clearly been developing assessment this remains an area for continued improvement.

104. Pupils use a wide range of books and in Year 6 and Year 2 are able to talk about poetry, fiction and non-fiction that they have met and about their favourite genre and authors. They can also make use of information retrieval skills in research tasks through the use of information technology and conventional texts. However, evidence for the integration of information technology in the English curriculum is limited. The library is regularly used by the pupils but has limited stock in some categories. Some of the Key Stage 2 stock of graded readers is in need of renewal and in this section there was little evidence of non-fiction graded readers. The co-ordinator has a standing budget for the renewal of books and this has identified areas of need. In addition to these resources, the school provides a range of opportunities through which pupils may enhance their skills and their enjoyment of the subject. These include such events as the regular visit of the author, Fred Sedgwick, performances by theatre companies and entries to a variety of competitions. In some year groups the curriculum is also enhanced by homework, although there is some evidence that the homework agreement with parents is not consistently administered.

105. The English co-ordinator has been in post one term and in that relatively short time has made a good start in gaining information regarding the subject within the school and in leading its future development. Priorities, such as boys' writing, have been identified and followed through with the purchase of resources, discussion regarding new strategies and involvement of pupils and staff in deciding on a plan of action. Some monitoring of planning and work scrutiny has begun but this now needs to become systematic and should also include lesson observations. The scrutiny of standards through data analysis and the tracking of pupil targets are also areas for development. The co-ordinator has a clear development plan for the year, and this is shared with the curriculum committee which is fully involved in the work of the school.

MATHEMATICS

106. Pupils' attainment is above what is expected nationally at the end of Year 2 and well above national expectations at the end of Year 6. The school has improved on the previously reported average standards at the end of both key stages. The introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy is having a positive impact in both key stages in raising attainment.

107. In the 2000 national tests for seven-year-olds, 94 per cent of pupils attained Level 2 or above. This is in line with the national average. The percentage of pupils achieving Level 3 or above was 27 per cent, which is in line with the national average. When compared with schools deemed to be similar in nature and context, the pupils' performance in the mathematics tests is below average. In the 2000 national tests for eleven-year-olds, 87 per cent of pupils attained Level 4 or above and 42 per cent the higher Level 5. These figures are well above the national average when compared with all schools and above average when compared with similar schools. The difference between the National Curriculum tests and the findings of the inspection arise because the group of pupils at the end of each key stage being tested was different from those being inspected, and the inspection takes account of a wider range of knowledge, skills and understanding than do national tests.

108. In Key Stage 1, the pupils' numeracy skills are developing well. Throughout the key stage they make satisfactory gains in their knowledge and understanding, and their levels of achievement are generally good. Based on analysis of the work in the pupils' books and discussions with

pupils, it is clear that by the age of 7 pupils work competently with numbers to 100. The vast majority can count forwards in twos and tens; mentally add and subtract numbers up to ten, and identify odd and even numbers. They have a good understanding of number bonds to 10. Many pupils are beginning to develop a sound understanding of place value involving ten and units. With the exception of the lower attaining pupils, pupils demonstrate satisfactory understanding of how to use centimetre rulers, estimate and then measure selected items. The lowest attaining pupils are less secure in their understanding of metric measures and although able to count forwards in two's and three's, they are less confident when counting backwards from given numbers. Most pupils can extract and interpret information given in tables. They are also able to communicate their findings in simple block graphs. They understand and use the terms tally and pictogram in their explanations. They can solve simple money problems using mental calculations and mentally recall their 2, 5, and 10 times tables. Most pupils can identify two-dimensional shapes correctly and recognise simple symmetrical forms.

109. Throughout Key Stage 2, pupils make very good progress in their ability to calculate and manipulate numbers mentally. In Year 3, pupils build upon the sound foundations of Key Stage 1. They are able to read, write and order numbers to 1000. They have a good understanding of fractions such as a half, quarter and a third. In Year 4 pupils work with good accuracy. They can add and subtract three digit numbers using written methods. They confidently use metric units of measurement in problem solving. Most pupils can estimate length and measure accurately using centimetres. They are also able to work out the perimeters of regular shapes. In Years 5 and 6 pupils make exceptionally good progress. The majority of pupils can count accurately in 25's and the most able pupils can use all four operations on two and three digit numbers. In Year 5, pupils have a good understanding of number factors. They can count mentally forwards and backwards using multiplication tables up to 10×10 , reduce fractions to their simplest forms, and carry out column addition and subtraction of numbers involving decimals and fractions. They are able to suggest suitable units to measure length, mass and capacity. In Year 6, many pupils demonstrate levels of understanding well above national expectations. Most pupils can read and interpret six figure numbers, can calculate mentally solutions to problems involving all four operations, can estimate accurately the answer to multiplication problems involving two, two digit numbers and they have a good understanding of measures, shapes, and data handling. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress throughout both key stages.
110. High expectations from teachers in the mental sessions of the numeracy lesson have made the pupils more aware of number and have undoubtedly increased the speed at which they make their calculations. Pupils have experience of all aspects of the mathematics curriculum, although there is currently insufficient use being made of ICT to develop the pupils' levels of understanding.
111. In Key Stage 1, the quality of teaching seen during the inspection period was judged to be satisfactory. In Key Stage 2, teaching during the inspection was judged to be very good overall. In both key stages, in the vast majority of lessons, teachers demonstrate secure subject knowledge, and teach the basic numeracy skills effectively. They produce detailed short-term lesson plans and work to these effectively. They have very good relationships with their pupils and very good behaviour management skills. In the majority of lessons observed, teachers provide a good range of challenging activities for most of their pupils. However, in a small minority of lessons, the level of challenge in the work set was too low, especially for more able pupils, and, as a result of this, too little progress was made. At Key Stage 2 especially, lessons are very well structured and have good pace. Teachers have very high expectations and set challenging tasks for all pupils. They use questioning skills extremely well to challenge and extend the pupils' current levels of understanding. As a result of this, pupils make very good progress throughout Key Stage 2 but especially so in Years 5 and 6. These lessons are set at a brisk pace and this continues until the end of the session. In the very best lessons, teachers were seen to share the learning intention of the lesson with the pupils and return to these at the plenary to assess whether they have been achieved. In a small minority of lessons at both key stages the higher attainers are not consistently challenged.
112. The daily numeracy hour is well established throughout the school. The framework is

effectively used to form the basis of teachers' planning. There are effective and attractive number displays in all classrooms. The co-ordinator, together with the headteacher, has been instrumental in developing assessment procedures. Consistent records are kept of children's current levels of attainment and pupils are set individual targets for improvement based on these. Assessment records are beginning to have an impact upon lesson planning although further work is needed in this area to ensure a consistent level of challenge in all lessons, especially in relation to higher attainers. Marking of pupils work is generally, but not always, completed conscientiously. The level and quality of feedback to pupils is inconsistent across the school. In some books, very few comments were seen and pupils were given little written information about the standards attained or how to improve their work.

113. Pupils throughout the school demonstrate positive attitudes to this subject. They are well behaved and attentive to their teachers. They are keen to take part in lessons, particularly the introductory mental sessions, putting up their hands eagerly to answer questions posed. When they are set individual or group work they settle down to work quickly and continue with sustained concentration. In most instances pupils present their work in a satisfactory manner, though at times their presentation is untidy. The good relationships that exist between pupils and between pupils and adults have a most positive effect on pupils' learning.
114. The co-ordinator is well qualified to manage this subject. She has good subject knowledge and is beginning to develop an understanding of the role of co-ordinator and supports colleagues well. Some monitoring activities have been completed, including analysis of end of key stage results. However, she is currently given insufficient time to undertake the full range of monitoring activities, and as a consequence of this, she does not have a clear grasp of the school's strengths and weaknesses in relation to teaching and learning in mathematics across the school. This is an area in need of further development. The co-ordinator uses the budget allocation effectively and there is a satisfactory range of resources for mathematics to support pupils' learning.

SCIENCE

115. Analysis of the National Curriculum Key Stage 2 tests in 2000 showed that, compared with all schools, standards were above average at the expected Level 4 and well above average at the higher Level 5. When compared with similar schools standards are above average. Trends prior to 2000 reveal that standards are broadly in line with the national average although results for 2000 are better than those for 1999 at both levels. There was no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls. The 2000 statutory teacher assessments at the end of Key Stage 1, when compared with all schools showed above average standards based on the number of pupils achieving Level 2, and with an above average proportion of pupils reaching the higher Level 3. When compared with schools in similar circumstances, pupils' results in science are in line with the national average.
116. By the end of Key Stage 1 standards are in line with national expectations and above expectations at the end of Key Stage 2, with some pupils attaining particularly high standards at the end of both key stages. This finding is similar to that of the last inspection when standards were judged to be at least in line with, and often exceeded, national expectations at the end of both key stages. Scrutiny of the work in the children's books and interviews with pupils demonstrate that children have a sound understanding of basic scientific principles. The inspection judgements differ from the results of the 2000 National Curriculum tests because the group of pupils at the end of each key stage being tested was different from those being inspected; the inspection takes account of a wider range of knowledge, skills and understanding than do national tests.
117. By the age of seven, pupils have some good experiences of investigating and testing e.g. investigating which materials are magnetic, which material would be suitable for keeping out the rain and what happens to ice and chocolate in a warm room. As a consequence of these regular opportunities, most pupils demonstrate confidence and skill in undertaking investigations. Less

able pupils often need help, however, in analysing how their observations lead them to form conclusions from the evidence that has been gathered. By the age of 7, most pupils can respond to suggestions about how to find things out and make their own suggestions about how to collect data to answer questions. More able pupils can carry out a fair test with some support, recognise why it is fair and record their observations in appropriate ways. They are also able to make simple, sensible predictions when encouraged to do so about what might happen in a range of investigative tasks. By the age of seven, many pupils also demonstrate a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of living things, materials and their properties, and a very good understanding of physical processes. Many pupils in Year 2, for example, can link cause and effect by explaining the break in a circuit as the reason for a light bulb failing to work. They can also explain what happens to a plant without water and light and how exercise affects our bodies.

118. Throughout Key Stage 2, pupils talk confidently about their work and are keen to show what they know, understand and can do. All pupils in Years 4 and 5 choose apparatus for experiments and plan these effectively. They can represent electrical circuits in diagrammatic form. More able pupils in Year 5 have an excellent understanding of the functions of an electrical switch and can describe their work with a good range of technical vocabulary. In Year 6, many pupils exhibit a high standard of attainment, which is above national expectations. They can describe the main functions of the most important human and plant organs, using sophisticated scientific vocabulary. They can identify a range of situations in which changes occur e.g. evaporation and condensation. They know how to separate mixtures e.g. salt and water and they can explain forces of friction and gravity using abstract ideas. They understand the effects caused by the earth's movement and make diagrams to show how sound waves are transmitted. Most pupils know how to measure and record accurately, control experiment variables, identify inconsistent data entries in their recorded evidence and can draw conclusions, which are consistent with their evidence.
119. Overall, the quality of teaching and of learning is good in both key stages and very good in the upper part of the school where, as a result, pupils make particularly rapid gains in their understanding and acquisition of skills associated with investigative science. Strengths in teaching across the school relate to clear subject knowledge and understanding, which is communicated clearly to pupils. Teachers have good relationships with their pupils, generally plan effectively and set tasks which are of interest to their pupils. In the best lessons seen during the week of the inspection, teachers gave clear, confident explanations and demonstrated high expectations of pupils. They set challenging tasks for all and provided good extension activities for the more able. These lessons were well structured and well paced, guided by clear learning intentions. Very good teaching and learning occur when the scientific element is clearly explained to pupils, demonstrated by practical tasks and there is probing questioning to check on pupils' understanding. For example, in Year 4 and 5 questioning strategies were used effectively to evaluate and extend pupil understanding of electrical circuits and in Year 6, probing questions were used to evaluate pupil understanding of how shadows are formed when they carried out their own investigations using shadow puppets. In these lessons, teachers prepared resources well and used intuitive on-going assessment to check on the pupils' understanding. In a small minority of lesson, the activities prepared, provided insufficient challenge, especially in relation to the more able children in the class. As a consequence, progress in learning in these lessons was deemed to be low. Pupils demonstrate very positive attitudes to this subject. In lessons, they listen attentively to teachers' explanations and ask questions to clarify their learning. They settle quickly and enthusiastically to tasks and work with good levels of concentration. They demonstrate good collaborative skills when working on group tasks.
120. The analysis of pupils' work indicates that teachers' expectations with regard to the presentation and marking of work are variable. In Key Stage 1, there is an occasional over reliance on worksheets when pupils could give their own written accounts of the work and practise their writing skills.
121. The science curriculum is broad and balanced and has been reviewed in line with Curriculum 2000. The work on investigative and experimental science is well focused and underpins the areas

that are concerned with life and living processes, materials and their properties and physical processes. Currently, insufficient use is made of information technology in the teaching of science both for research purposes and in recording and presenting of results.

122. The subject resources are well managed by the co-ordinator who provides good support for colleagues. There is a clear scheme of work in place and this has been reviewed following recent changes to the National Curriculum. Teachers are making regular assessments of the progress that pupils are making in science, although there are some inconsistencies in teacher assessment levels and inconsistencies in how this information is used to inform day-to-day planning. The co-ordinator has undertaken a limited amount of informal monitoring but does not yet have a full understanding of the subject strengths and weaknesses across the school. This needs to be developed to include a more rigorous monitoring of standards of teaching and learning in all classes.
123. The co-ordinator makes good use of the allocated budget, and as a consequence, resource levels in this subject are good and readily accessible to teachers. The co-ordinators subject action plan provides the school with a clear set of goals for development and improvement.

ART

124. By the time pupils are seven and eleven, standards of work in art are above national expectations and have been maintained since the previous inspection.
125. It is not possible to make a secure judgement on the quality of teaching, learning and pupils' attitudes as only one lesson was observed during the inspection. However, the scrutiny of pupils' previous work, displays, planning documents and discussions indicate that pupils are given a good range of opportunities to develop artistic skills, express ideas and feelings, and use a variety of media. All groups including those pupils with special educational needs make good progress.
126. By the end of Year 2, pupils know to look closely at shape, form and shadow when drawing and sketching objects. These skills are well demonstrated in their pencil drawings of historical artefacts which show an impressive eye for detail whilst their self-portraits show their developing skill in the observation of facial features. Pupils skilfully mix different shades of green and successfully blend colours together to make attractive leaf prints. Younger pupils in Key Stage 1, experiment with a range of techniques and gain experience of using a variety of drawing materials, such as crayon, pastels, oil pastels, pencil, felt-tip pens and charcoal. when printing, painting and drawing. They weave wool to achieve pleasing designs in their book-marks and sew carefully, using a variety of simple stitches when making fabric collages.
127. Throughout Key Stage 2, pupils continue to develop their skills so that by the end of the key stage most show a good eye for detail and give sensitive responses to a range of media and stimuli. Pupils in Year 6, recognise important features of the style of several famous artists including Beryl Cook and Picasso and are able to access websites to gain more information about them. Their accuracy in recording what they see is good, and their current work in the style of Van Gogh shows a good use of well-matched colours and tones and captures the essence of his style. Pupils in Year 3, develop a range of skills and techniques in the way they experiment with patterns, gaining inspiration for their block prints and stencils from patterns on fabrics from different cultures and from wallpaper. Art is one of the few subjects where pupils apply their ICT skills well and pupils in Year 4 show a bold use of colour when using paint programs to produce work in the style of Mondrian. In connection with work in history, pupils in Year 4, produce detailed drawings of Tudor portraits which they confidently transfer on to fabric and decorate using the batik technique. Pupils show an increasing ability to reproduce what they see with great detail and accuracy, using, for example, their skills in mixing the exact intended tones and shades of paint to depict a variety of fruit. The after-school art club for Key Stage 2 pupils has produced three-dimensional masks, which are colourful and expressive and incorporate the effective use of

collage. Pupils enjoy using clay to make three-dimensional wall plaques of historical figures and make good use of their artistic skills in supporting their work across many subjects of the curriculum. By the end of the key stage, many pupils have learned how to evaluate their own work and make appropriate changes to improve the quality.

128. The art co-ordinator provides good subject leadership. She has a personal enthusiasm for the subject and provides good advice and supports colleagues informally. However, she has yet to work alongside colleagues across the key stages to share expertise and gain a greater knowledge of the work undertaken with pupils outside of the year group in which she works. She recognises that the current long-term plans which form the basis of the scheme of work do not ensure that pupils' skills are built upon from year to year and that short-term plans do not always identify provision for pupils of different abilities. Although there is no whole-school format for tracking individual pupil's development of skills, the co-ordinator is collecting samples of pupils' work to ensure that all teachers are aware of the pupils' progress and attainment in each year group. Resources continue to be adequate and are used well. The use of materials and artefacts from other cultures and traditions to inspire work in art is developing. Work previously done by pupils has been exhibited in the local library and other public places. For example, the school exhibited textiles in the Stevenage Arts Week and was the national overall winner for the Vision for Europe competition. Displays of pupils' work are effective in creating a stimulating environment in some areas throughout the school. The subject contributes well to pupils' cultural and spiritual development.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

129. Standards in both key stages are generally in line with national expectations and have been maintained since the last inspection.

130. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils make designs and are able to evaluate the outcome of the finished product. They are starting to represent ideas in plan form and can label significant details. They use equipment such as scissors efficiently and are aware of health and safety issues. They can join materials and apply finishing details appropriately. They are able to relate their product to the original design and suggest improvements, such as the pop-up cards being made by Year 2.

131. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' designs demonstrate more detail and improvement, some dimensions are recorded and pupils give consideration to the resources that will be needed. A few pupils generate more than one design but ongoing improvements often result from pupil discussions. Pupils use knowledge from other subjects well, making clear links particularly with art and science. Pupils demonstrate satisfactory accuracy in the use of equipment for cutting, sawing, measuring and joining. The final products are relatively robust, although the finishing techniques are variable. Pupils are able to evaluate their work and suggest future improvements, for example, in the use of cams in a range of "surprise" models in Year 5.

132. Pupils' attitudes towards the subject are very good. They are enthusiastic, work hard and are confident to contribute and share ideas. They bring good imagination to their designs and maintain their concentration very well. In lessons, the good behaviour is enhanced by the high expectations teachers have of the ways in which pupils respond. In discussion with pupils from both key stages they are very enthusiastic about their work in design and technology. They are able to explain what they have done in the past and what they are looking forward to in future year groups. The contribution the subject makes to the social development of the pupils is well demonstrated by their enthusiasm to talk about, praise and point out the work of other classes which is exhibited around the school. This is also seen in some spontaneous praise for each other in lessons. Said of a "cam" model, "that's a really clever idea".

133. The teaching at Key Stage 1 observed during the inspection was satisfactory. Pupils are given clear learning objectives for the lessons and good questioning ensured that all pupils understood

the techniques and reasons for design and evaluation. The use of an unsuccessful pop-up card enhanced pupil understanding and allowed them to develop their ideas. A very small sample of teaching was observed in Key Stage 2 and this was excellent. Pupils are given clear learning objectives and high quality individual support and questioning which prompts them to develop their ideas and review their work with a critical eye. Lessons are well timed and structured enabling each pupil to make progress. High expectations ensure that each pupil achieves well. Pupils with special educational needs have focused support and the most able are challenged to further the complexity of their designs and quality of finish, such as the Year 5 Angel on a Cloud model.

134. The planned curriculum indicates a satisfactory level of coverage including all the elements of the curriculum, however there is insufficient time allocated to develop the subject to its full potential. A review of the curriculum time and the cross-curricular time elements is being planned by the subject co-ordinator. The curriculum is effective in making design and technology relevant through cross-curricular links, such as the Greek pots in Year 4 history, pneumatic models in Year 6 science and pop-up cards in Year 2 art. Pupils are offered a range of opportunities outside the formal curriculum to take part in local and national events. This enhances the status of the subject and underpins the motivation, enthusiasm and pride the pupils have in their work.
135. The design and technology room and resources are well organised and displayed, ensuring pupils' have good access. The pupils are able to talk about the issues of health and safety and to recognise various hazards. They are well aware of the need to use and store tools correctly and can talk about the health and safety implications involved in making pizza in Year 5 food technology.
136. The leadership of the subject by the co-ordinator is good. Planning for the subject is overseen, resources are reviewed and ordered and pupils' work is scrutinised. The co-ordinator is very keen to develop the provision and is aware of the need to monitor the quality of teaching and learning systematically and to promote a more formal system of assessment of pupil attainment and progress.

GEOGRAPHY

137. There was a limited amount of recorded evidence available at the time of inspection. Judgements on the standards of pupil attainment have been largely derived from a limited number of lesson observations, discussions with teachers and interviews with pupils. Overall, the school has made satisfactory improvements since the previous inspection.
138. In both key stages, standards achieved by pupils in geography are broadly similar to those expected for their age, with a few pupils attaining higher levels. Most pupils show satisfactory geographical skills, knowledge and understanding. However, standards attained in this subject are lower than the standards that the pupils attain in many other subjects in the school.
139. By Year 2, pupils have a relatively sound understanding of the local environment. They are able to make comparisons of their own locality with Old Stevenage and Blackpool. They are beginning to use appropriate geographical vocabulary e.g. hill, river, town and village in describing places they have visited and studied. All but the least able pupils demonstrate satisfactory understanding of how to use a simple key in map reading and are able to describe how to undertake simple map drawing exercises based upon their recent study of the book 'Rosie's Walk'. They are able to describe houses and buildings in their street, but beyond this, they have a limited awareness of physical and human features in their immediate locality. Work in their books suggests that they are beginning to develop satisfactory skills in drawing maps and plans. They are able to use photographs and pictures to help them to find out about places and they demonstrate developing skills in using these to respond to geographical questions. They can name and locate some of the major UK cities. More able pupils can discuss changes in the local environment but have an insecure grasp of geographical enquiry skills.

140. At Key Stage 2, pupils can comment on geographical features, follow directions and read maps and plans. Some pupils show an appreciation of environmental issues. In Year 3 pupils extend their knowledge and understanding of the local area through a study of maps and photographs. They are able to identify places and their purposes using the symbols and the key. By Year 4, mapping skills are developing well and pupils are able to offer reasons for some of their observations and judgements about places. By Year 6, pupils have a relatively sound knowledge of their local environment. They are able to describe in some detail, using sophisticated geographical terms e.g. 'eastern, landscape, leisure', the local town centre and to compare and contrast physical and human features in the wider environment with their own streets. They have a good understanding of cities and rivers in the UK but a limited knowledge of places beyond this. They are developing further map-reading skills and knowledge and can use six figure grid references, symbols and map keys to locate and describe places. However they have an insecure understanding of the importance of location in understanding places and are also unsure of geographical patterns such as population growth and industry. They are relatively knowledgeable about some sources of evidence that can be used in undertaking geographical investigations. They demonstrate good understanding of work covered in recent weeks such as the terms longitude and latitude in identifying the location of places on a world map and in determining the impact of flood/drought on human activity.
141. In the small sample of lessons seen, the quality of teaching observed ranged from satisfactory to very good. In all lessons, teachers show secure subject knowledge and give clear confident explanations to pupils. Class management is very good and there is skilful use of praise and questioning to encourage and support learning. In the best lessons, teachers are well prepared. They make learning intentions clear to pupils and suitably challenging tasks are effectively planned to match the needs of the pupils. The pace of lessons is suitably brisk and pupils make good progress in developing new knowledge and understanding.
142. Pupils demonstrate positive attitudes and enjoy geography. They respond to questioning, follow instructions and sustain their concentration in individual or group work. They stay on task throughout the lesson and treat resources respectfully. They work well collaboratively, enjoy talking about their work and contributing to discussion in lessons.
143. Assessment and recording of pupil progress is currently under-developed in geography and in need of improvement. The format of reporting to parents is satisfactory but the content of many reports is insufficient and makes too little reference to the progress that pupils are making. In some cases, comments are very general and could be applied to most pupils in the class. Presentation of work in the pupils' books is satisfactory overall but there are pockets of inconsistency across classes, which need to be addressed. Schemes of work are insufficiently developed. Presently there is some overlap in content in different year groups. During the inspection, for example, pupils in one year group were repeating work which had been previously covered.
144. Pupils are currently given insufficient opportunities to use information technology to further development of geographical knowledge, skills and understanding.
145. Due to staff changes, a new co-ordinator has been appointed to this subject. She has not yet had an opportunity to develop a good knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses but is aware of the need for significant improvements. In particular, she is aware that schemes of work, lesson planning and assessment are in need of improvement. Plans for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning in the school are currently under-developed. The quality of resources is satisfactory but these need to be extended in the future to enable teachers to provide increased attention to the development of geographical enquiry skills and the study of geographical themes.
146. Some good use is made of the school grounds in developing pupils' learning and the school organizes extended school journeys in Years 3, 4 and 5 to explore different environments, but pupils are currently given only limited opportunities to engage in practical field studies.

HISTORY

147. Little teaching of history was seen during the inspection, but evidence was drawn from scrutiny of work and from discussions with pupils. Standards in history as seen in the Year 6 lesson and in discussion with Year 6 and Year 2 pupils are above national expectations and have been maintained since the last inspection.
148. Year 6 pupils have a good understanding of the periods they have studied. They can explain industrial developments during the 1930s and offer views and different interpretations of the Jarrow March, demonstrating good social and moral development. The pupils are very enthusiastic about the historical topics they have covered previously and are able to recount numerous details of chronology and social facts from the visit to the Hitchin Victorian school on eating olives at their Roman feast. Pupils use historical sources well and are able to offer interpretations of causation and possible effects of change. Year 4 were able to discuss their knowledge of the Ancient Greeks and Year 2 discussed in some detail why they thought Guy Fawkes attempted to kill James I in the Gun Powder Plot.
149. Due to the timing of the inspection, limited work was available during the inspection. The time allocated to the teaching of history needs review. Although the time allocated is well used, it is insufficient to fully complete the scheme of work without more careful consideration of cross-curricular time allocations. This has begun in Year 2 where history was continued and extended within the literacy framework, a strategy that worked well. History is also well integrated into art and design and technology, connections understood and enjoyed by the pupils.
150. Pupils with special educational needs have full access to the curriculum with focused support and differentiated tasks.
151. Pupils are very enthusiastic about history and thoroughly enjoy the range of projects they are offered. The scheme of work is carefully constructed to provide a chronological base and a range of interesting and challenging experiences. The pupils know exactly what elements of history they study each year and look forward with great enthusiasm to each project. Trips and events have been planned to support each project and these provide high points for the pupils. In the limited number of lessons observed the pupils' attitudes were good, they shared resources, discussed ideas and were keen to answer questions and contribute ideas.
152. Too few lessons were observed to offer an account of the quality of teaching. However, the plans and scrutiny of work show that teachers follow the scheme of work and work hard to enrich the curriculum through visits, making particularly good use of their local Stevenage Museum subscription. Good use is made of ICT, for example through the use of the Web, CD Roms and a digital camera.
153. Although the pupils' work is marked there are few evaluative comments and assessment of pupil progress is informal. The assessment of pupil progress and attainment is an area for development. This would also enhance the reports to parents which currently refer to the curriculum covered and the attitudes of the pupils, but make little reference to progress and attainment.
154. The co-ordinator for history has been leading the subject for two terms and her enthusiasm is evident. In this relatively short time she has ensured that the long-term planning is in place and has discussed the medium term planning with class teachers. She is developing a good resource bank for the school, including time line resource banks, which Year 2 described in some detail, particularly the hot water bottles. The co-ordinator is also actively involved in raising the profile of the subject through entries to competitions and local events such as their successful entry to the Photographs for the Future in which pupils' work is on display in Stevenage. The leadership of the subject is satisfactory and will be good when other aspects of the monitoring role are developed, such as work scrutiny, pupil discussions or lesson observations.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

155. Since the last inspection, the school has not only maintained the good standards identified but has also made good progress in raising attainment even further in the juniors. An ICT suite has been established, the optional national scheme of work has been adopted and teachers' confidence is improving. Consequently standards, by the end of end of Year 6, are above those expected nationally. All aspects of the subject are covered and pupils have many opportunities to practise, refine and develop their information technology skills to the expected level. However, they have few planned opportunities to use computers to support and enhance their learning in other areas of the curriculum. Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 have not been maintained and are now just in line with national expectations.
156. In Key Stage 1, the youngest pupils are familiar with the function of the keyboard. They use the cursor, number and letter keys and the mouse for selecting an icon and for moving items around the screen. With adult support they confidently open a programme and follow instructions to find the meaning of words. Pupils word process simple sentences. They delete and insert letters, and use upper and lower case type with accuracy to enhance their work. By the end of the key stage, many pupils work with relative independence on the computers. They use a variety of programs with increasing confidence, log on and off the computer and some print and save their work without adult support. They successfully use a graphics program and using a variety of tools, such as the 'eraser' for correcting errors and the 'paint brush' for adding colour they create attractive fireworks pictures. Pupils design a route for an on-screen turtle and most have a developing understanding of the uses of information technology in the world around them.
157. At the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have many well developed skills in information technology and most use the computers with great confidence. Younger pupils in Year 3 use a database to organise their information. They confidently answer questions about their database, such as, '*When and who created it?*' and '*How many fields in the database?*', They easily change the font, size and colour to enhance their work and skilfully merge text and graphics to produce good quality pieces of work, which included imported clipart about the Romans. As pupils move through the school they become a little more sophisticated about what they do with the appearance of text and there is some extension of the work on word processing. However, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to draft and edit work directly onto the computer. Pupils in Year 4 successfully use their knowledge and understanding of 'cut and paste' to insert, delete and replace text when writing instructions for making a pencil snake. They successfully use a graphics package to design images in the style of Mondrian and compare their computer generated designs with the traditional method of creating pictures. By the end of the key stage, pupils know the difference between accessing information from a hard disk and CD-ROM programs which they successfully use to extract information linked to their topic. Pupils create their own spreadsheets and confidently input data using the correct formulae. They successfully interrogate their databases and some print out their findings in a variety of forms such as bar charts. Pupils design a web page and add information to their web sites including photographs of themselves, using a digital camera. Most are familiar with powerpoint and confidently create a hyperlink between the pages. Examination of pupils' work showed that computers have yet to make a significant impact on pupils' learning in all subjects of the curriculum.
158. The good progress pupils make in both key stages as well as pupils good behaviour and positive attitudes towards the subject are a direct result of the good and often very good teaching and the very good resources available. The computer suite is a valuable resource and has had a highly significant impact on progress, as pupils have regular access to good quality programs and equipment. All teachers have at least a sound knowledge of the subject and are growing in confidence, which is reflected in their work with the pupils. In the most effective practice, high standards of work and behaviour are promoted and, as a result, pupils respond by working hard and learning well. This was well demonstrated in the Year 5 lesson on examining databases to withdraw information and record findings. The technician gave precise instructions and introduced correct vocabulary very systematically which ensured that pupils confidently knew

about 'databases', 'fields' and 'data' when answering questions about Monarchs. Help was given to pupils who struggled, and pupils were paired to make sure that all could access the work. Pupils respond with infectious enthusiasm to the subject and have a great desire to learn more. They enjoy their sessions in the computer suite and are reluctant to leave when the lesson ends. When working in pairs, pupils learn to share ideas and help each other to use the computer. This contributes well to their attainment. Using appropriate technological language pupils confidently ask questions of their teachers, understand about taking care of equipment and do so responsibly.

159. The headteacher, ably assisted by the technician, gives good leadership in the subject. She has identified appropriate priorities for development such as making greater use of ICT across the curriculum and has recognised that there is a need to have a more structured approach to tracking how well individual pupils build on their skills and expertise as they move through the school. Formal procedures for monitoring of teaching and learning in order to identify precisely where support is required and for assessing pupils' attainment are not fully in place. The recently adopted scheme of work provides good guidance to help teachers plan effectively. The resources are very good with one computer between two pupils in the computer suite and other, sometimes older, computers available for use in each classroom. The use of the classroom computers is not as well planned as those in the suite and some of them are not used as effectively to support learning. The accommodation is adequate and the school has plans to extend the computer suite in the near future. Statutory requirements for the delivery of the subject are fully met

MUSIC

160. Overall standards in music are above national expectations and by the end of Key Stage 2 are well above, with music occupying an important position in the school's curriculum. Music is now a strength of the school. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection.

161. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils can sing in tune, recognise the difference between high and low notes and judge rising and falling scales and they are gaining a very good musical vocabulary. They discern and create simple rhythms which they reproduce on percussion instruments. They sing a wide variety of songs known by heart and they have a range of opportunities for performance.

162. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have further developed their understanding of music. They appraise a wide range of musical styles in terms of mood and type and their musical vocabulary is very good. The pupils sing a wide range of songs which include complex harmonies and parts and they play a range of percussion instruments for performance and accompaniment. The range of peripatetic music lessons provide the pupils with further enhancement of their musical skills. These opportunities, together with specialist teaching, ensure good provision for the keen and more able musicians.

163. Pupils enjoy music in Key Stage 1, they behave well and join in with enthusiasm. Pupils in Key Stage 2 contribute very well in lessons being confident to contribute through performance, discussion or by listening. Their enjoyment of music is evident through their enthusiasm and through their attitudes and relationships and the high quality of their work. On a number of occasions, musical experiences provided uplifting experiences for the pupils when, for example, some new musical instruments were first demonstrated. With closed eyes, pupils listened to the ocean drum and many recounted ideas of the sea, whilst the energy bell resulted in pupils listening in complete and amazed silence. The pupils' social skills are well developed, they are encouraged to take turns, to listen to each other and appreciate the efforts of others. They are also encouraged to develop their independence through the allocation of music monitor roles in which they look after the instruments.

164. The quality of teaching is good overall and very good to excellent in the upper school. Lessons are well organised and planning shows a clear emphasis on the learning. Many opportunities are used for the pupils to experience and discuss music from other cultures, such as North American Indian and North African. The majority of lessons move at a good pace and all pupils are encouraged to take an active role. In the most successful lessons, a good balance is maintained

between teaching and performing, and questioning is used to extend and challenge each ability group. The firm, fair and good humoured style of teaching does much to enhance pupils' enjoyment of the lessons, and encourages the pupils to respond well to the high expectations of the teachers.

165. Pupils with special needs are well integrated into lessons through careful planning and support. The school also provides a weekly high quality music lesson for pupils with special educational needs. This is carefully planned to develop self-esteem, confidence and social skills, whilst teaching music and speaking and listening skills.

166. The model of teaching provided by the co-ordinator is excellent. In one Year 6 lesson observed, the pupils were introduced to a range of new musical instruments which they learnt to play and select by sound, they listened intently to a range of modern musical styles which they subsequently discussed and appraised, and finally successfully identified the musical elements of each. During the lesson the pupils were ably tutored by the teacher who, through careful questioning, ensured all pupils were engaged and experienced success.

167. The management of the subject is good and should be very good when time can be allocated to monitoring and consistent assessment of pupil attainment and progress. The curriculum is well planned and is allocated an appropriate amount of teaching time. The school has also developed a carefully balanced Creative Arts afternoon which ensures the subject maintains its high profile. Music is evident in other aspects of school life, such as the music playing in the school before the school day begins and the high profile of music in assembly. The Rhythm Club and Choir are well attended and the school takes part in a range of additional activities such as, the Song for the Millennium and the Hertfordshire Choirs performance at the Royal Albert Hall. As well as the pupils taking part in regular school performances for parents, visitors are also invited to school to share their music, such as the African musicians who visited in the summer term. The school is well resourced and the musical instruments are carefully looked after by the pupils.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

168. At the time of the last inspection, attainment in physical education was reported to be below national expectations with 'a significant minority of pupils under attaining'. Although there is evidence to show that improvements were made immediately after the last inspection, these have not been sustained and evidence from lesson observations indicates that by the end of both key stages, standards in physical education, including dance, gymnastics and games skills, are slightly below national expectations at the end of Key Stage 2 and at the expected level at the end of Year 6.

169. A total of seven lessons were observed during the course of the inspection: three lessons in Key Stage 1 and four lessons in Key Stage 2. These consisted of six gymnastic lessons and one games lesson. No dance lessons were planned during the inspection week. Evidence was also collected through scrutiny of teachers' plans and schemes of work and through discussions with pupils and teachers.

170. In Key Stage 1, inspection evidence indicates that whilst many pupils demonstrate attainment levels in line with expectations, by the end of the key stage, a significant minority of pupils are insecure in their understanding and skills development. In movement activities, most pupils can remember, reproduce and explore simple actions with developing control and co-ordination. Some pupils freely volunteer to demonstrate their skills in movement although many are unsure as to how these movements can be refined and improved. In games, most pupils demonstrate a growing understanding of some basic tactics and can throw and catch a ball with consistency. They play simple versions of games and show some awareness of the space available as well as a basic awareness of others around the space. However, many pupils do not have a well-

developed understanding of safety in the physical education environment. Many, but not all, pupils in Year 2 demonstrate a suitable range of ball skills, being able to throw and catch a small ball, some with good technique. However, evidence from lesson observation indicates that too little emphasis is given to planning for learning and progression of skills.

171. Towards the end of Key Stage 2, all pupils show a developing awareness of how to plan and perform movements with greater precision. They can develop longer and more varied movement and are beginning to demonstrate smooth transitions between their actions. Some, but not all, pupils are confident in demonstrating sequences of movements. Many pupils show growing awareness of how to evaluate and improve upon their own performance. In discussions, some pupils demonstrate a limited understanding of how to apply basic compositional ideas to create dance phrases with a partner. Most pupils show a growing sense of responsibility in undertaking personal warm up routines and demonstrate safe practice in handling apparatus and equipment. Most pupils understand the need for a warm up before starting exercise and they can also describe in simple terms what is happening to their bodies during exercise.
172. In Key Stage 1, the quality of teaching in two out of three lessons was judged to be satisfactory with one unsatisfactory lesson. Although some pupils worked hard to develop their sequences in all of these lessons, others did little more than run around. The quality of work seen was generally below expected levels and pupils made too little progress in all three lessons. Progress was further limited in the unsatisfactory lesson by insufficient time being devoted to the lesson objectives and too long being spent listening to the teacher, resulting in very little pupil activity. In lessons where the quality of teaching was not good, many pupils lacked concentration and took little notice of others in the class when moving apparatus. In one lesson this inactivity resulted in pupils engaging in inappropriate behaviour.
173. In Key Stage 2, the overall quality of teaching was judged to be satisfactory. In the best lessons, pupils responded well to the teaching they received. They were keen and interested and tried hard to practise and improve their skills. They listened carefully to instructions and behaved well. They also collaborated well in small groups. Classes were well managed and pupils listened well to their teachers' explanations. These lessons had a brisk pace with a good sequence of activities enabling pupils to practise and consolidate their skills. In Key Stage 2, pupils are taught to use the gymnastics equipment safely. Pupils are generally provided with good opportunities to plan and evaluate their work, though they are not given enough guidance on how to refine and improve the movements.
174. In both key stages, it is evident that some teachers do not demonstrate secure subject knowledge. In the weakest lessons at both key stages, planned activities provided insufficient challenge for many pupils. The lessons were not well structured and pupils spent too much time listening to teachers. This is having a significant impact on the standards pupils are able to achieve. Although the attainment of pupils in the lessons observed in Year 5 was in line with expectations, it was judged to be below expected standards in many of the other year groups.
175. At the time of the inspection, the local swimming pool was closed for repairs. However, it is clear that the school normally fulfils the requirement to teach swimming to pupils at Key Stage 2 and the vast majority are able to swim 25 metres, as required by the National Curriculum, by the time they leave the school.
176. A new co-ordinator has recently been appointed. Although she has good subject knowledge, she has had limited opportunities to date to undertake monitoring activities and consequently does not have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the school. However, she has recognised the need to address the weaknesses in the subject's assessment procedures and the need to update the current scheme of work. There are no structures in place for the assessment of pupils' progress in physical education at the present time. The existing scheme of work does not provide teachers with sufficiently clear guidance on how to build and develop skills as pupils move through the school.

177. The school provides a small range of opportunities for pupils to participate in extra-curricular activities and competitive team games. Resources for teaching are generally well organised and adequate, although the large physical education mats are worn and in need of urgent replacement. The school benefits from a relatively good hall space and the outdoor areas are sufficient to enable effective teaching of all aspects of the subject.